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BA., H.D.C.

THE DIOCESE OF KOTTAR

A REVIEW OF ITS GROWTH

Compiled by

Rev. J. M. Villavarayan, Ph. D., S. T. L.

With a Foreword by

H. E. the Most Rev. Dr. T. R. Agniswami S. J.,
Bishop of Kottar.

Model Poultry Centre,
KOTTAR.

S·F·XAVIER

Dedication

TO

SAINT THOMAS

AND

SAINT FRANCIS XAVIER

APOSTLES OF INDIA

AND

TO ALL OTHERS

KNOWN AND UNKNOWN

WHO

DOWN THROUGH THE CENTURIES

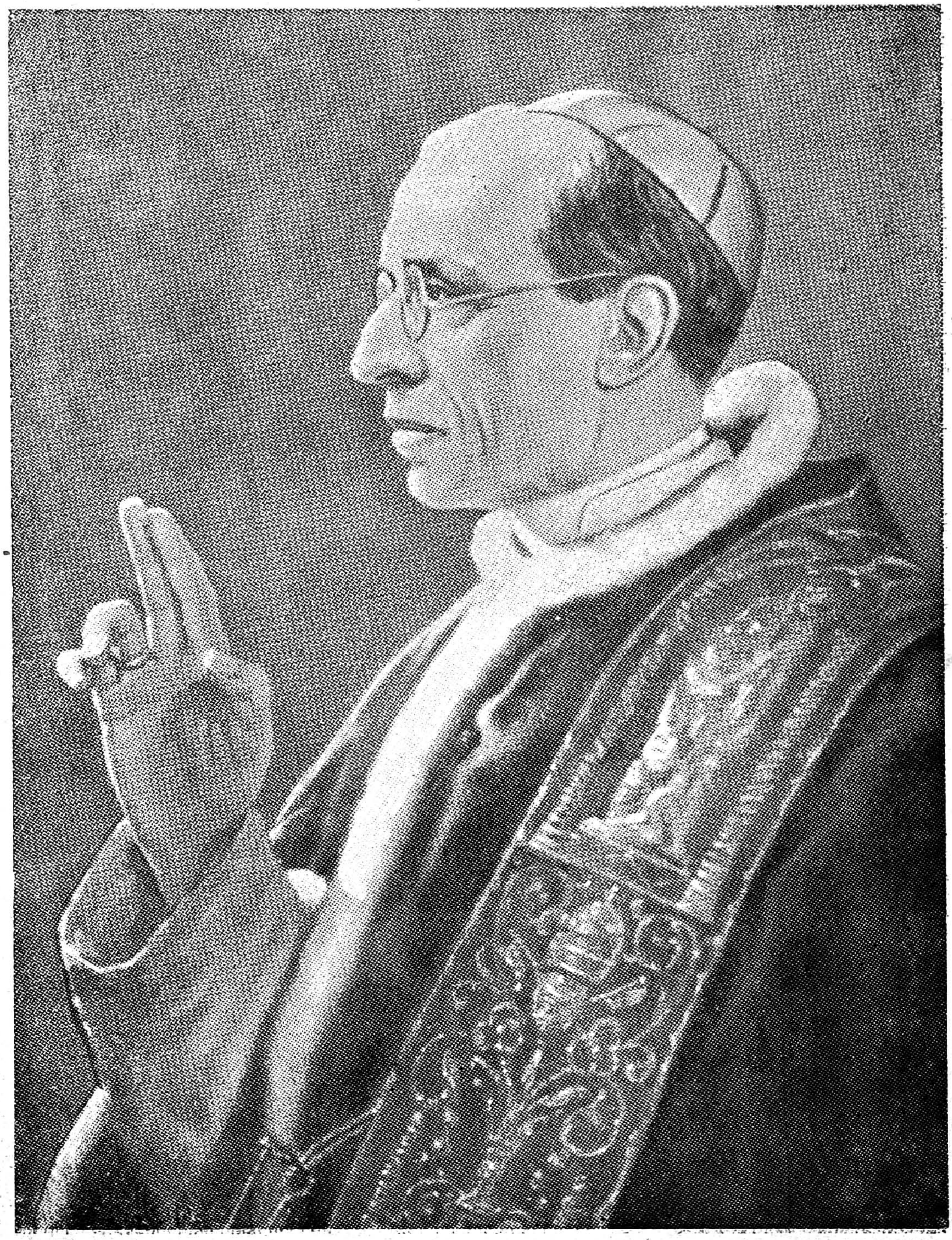
TO THE PRESENT DAY

HAVE CULTIVATED

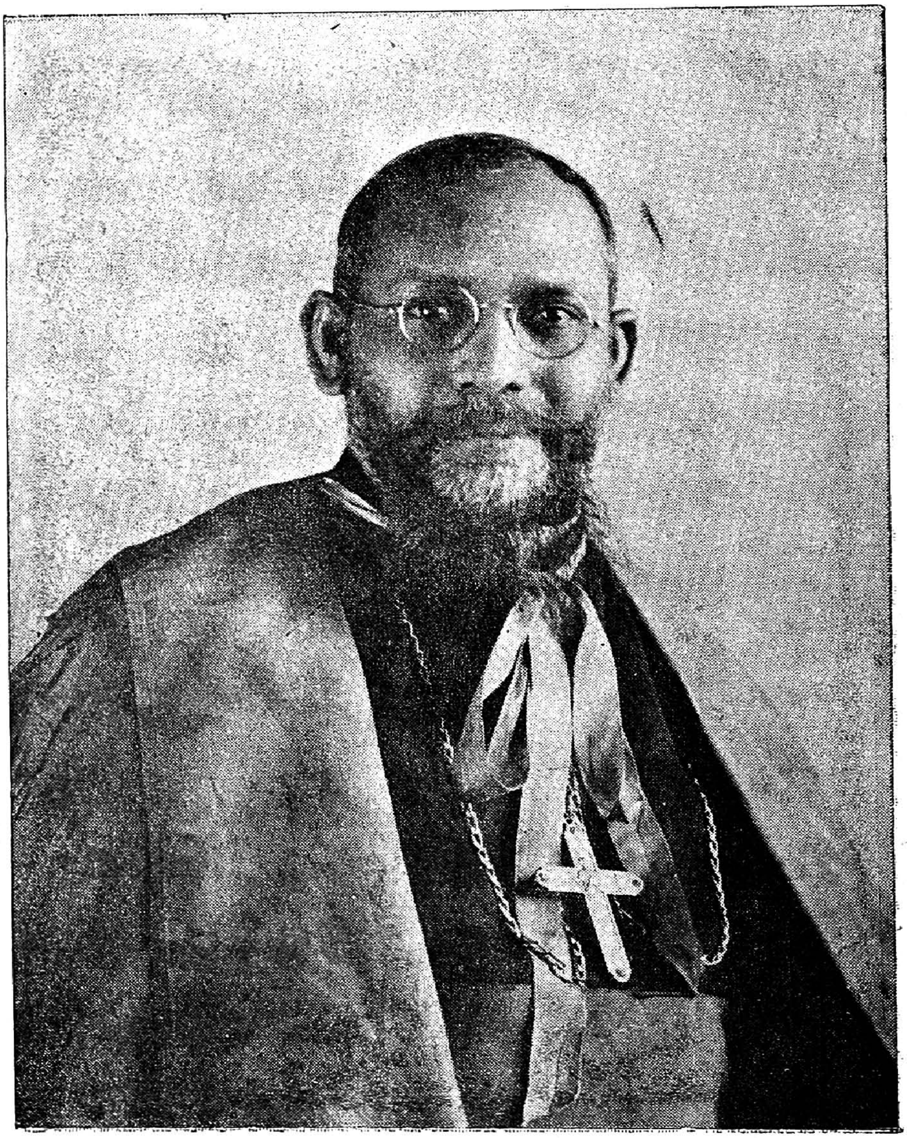
THIS VINEYARD

OF THE LORD

A. M. D. G.



HIS HOLINESS PIUS XII



H. E. THE MOST REV. DR. T. R. AGNISWAMI S. J.
Bishop of Kottar.

FOREWORD

To commemorate the completion of 25 years since the erection of the Diocese of Kottar, on September 28th 1955 a Pontifical H. Mass was offered and the "Te Deum" sung in thanksgiving for all the favours and benefits received from the Almighty. The same day the work of the extention of the small cathedral was taken up and a month later an orphanage for boys was inaugurated. All this was done quietly without any external manifestation.

It is to be noted that Kottar formed a part of the Diocese of Quilon until May 1930 when by the Apostolic Letter "Ad Pastorale Ministerium" of H. H. Pius XI, it was erected into a separate Diocese. Hence for a very long period this territory had a close connection with the Diocese of Quilon.

The present state of this Diocese is the result of the work not only of the living but also of those who have laboured and gone to eternal rest. Among the latter the most outstanding figure is H. E. Mgr. Aloysius M. Benziger O. C. D. It is during his able administration that the whole territory of the Diocese of Quilon made very rapid progress and steps were taken to separate this Tamil area to form a new Diocese. H. E. Mgr. Lawrence the first Bishop of the newly erected Diocese did his best for the improvement of this territory in spite of initial difficulties inevitable in the administration of a new institution. To these prelates and to all the priests and religious who have laboured and are now labouring in this part of the Lord's vineyard go my gratitude and appreciation.

The commemorative volume of the Silver Jubilee of the Diocese that is now published gives a brief history of this territory before the division from Quilon and a detailed account of the growth of the Diocese after its erection. The reader will easily understand that the author Rt. Rev. J. M. Villavarayar, Ph. D., S. T. L., has taken great pains to gather the material for his work from various sources in order to furnish as much of useful information as possible. He is to be congratulated for bringing out this brochure which, I am sure, will serve as a valuable contribution to the history of the Indian Mission field.

May God bless this Diocese and shower His graces and favours in abundance on this Southernmost territory of our motherland for His greater glory and the salvation of souls.

Nagercoil,
6—11—1956.

† ***T. R. Agniswami S. J.***
Bishop of Kottar.

PREFACE

On 28th September of the year of the Lord 1955 the diocese of Kottar celebrated the Silver Jubilee of its creation. The idea of preparing this short history was then born.

It was only after the work was launched that the vastness of the ocean before it was fully realised. Many were the difficulties, some as yet insurmountable, that had to be faced. And the achievment has taken a longer time than was expected.

The first part: The Diocese in the making, has been made very brief. The exploits of the great St. Francis Xavier in these parts are well known to need detailed recounting and have been told very succinctly. The interested reader is referred to the many books quoted. It is also to be remembered that a commemorative volume on the Saint was produced in 1954, the fourth centenary of his death.

More attention has been paid to the later history of Christianity here, details of which are not widely known. But here too, there is no claim to an exhaustive study. The major libraries of the Vatican, Lisbon, Paris etc., as well as the Archives of the Orders and Societies that have laboured here, await yet the eager worker. Also the archives of Verapoly, Cochin and Goa may yield precious information, unavailable to the present writer. What has been attempted therefore is to indicate, in general lines only, the growth of Christianity in the territory that is today the diocese of Kottar.

The other, longer, part deals with the progress of the diocese in the past quarter of a century. This too cannot claim to be exhaustive. It may be that some information of importance has been omitted, some feature left out. This may be due to the fact that there are no consecutive records or diaries of the acts of the diocese. Information had to be gathered piecemeal from many sources. It is hoped that this book may serve as a record, though unofficial, for future historians.

Though published in 1956, the fact and figures given are meant to be true only as of the end of 1955. This is supposed to be a Silver Jubilee Commemorative Volume.

My sincere thanks are due to all those who have made my task lighter by their encouragement and help.

Bishop's House.
Nagercoil,
28th Sept., 1956.

J. M. Villavarayan.

Silver Jubilee Messages

From

His Excellency the Most Rev. MARTIN LUCAS, S. V. D.,
Apostolic Internuncio, New Delhi.

BISHOP AGNISWAMI,
Bishop's House, Kottar.

YOUR LORDSHIP PRIESTS RELIGIOUS AND FAITHFUL ACCEPT MY MOST SINCERE CONGRATULATIONS ON TWENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY ERECTION DIOCESE. IN NAME OF HOLY FATHER I THANK ALL WHO HAVE CO-OPERATED SO WELL WITH THE BISHOP FOR GREATER GLORY OF GOD AND WELFARE OF COUNTRY. MAY GOD SHOWER CHOICEST BLESSINGS ON YOU ALL

INTERNUNCIO

MGR. JOSEPH ATTIPETTY,
Archbishop of Verapoly.

Latin Archbishop's House,
Ernakulam,
Sept. 12, 1955.

His Lordship the RT. REV. T. R. AGNISWAMI S. J.,
Bishop of Kottar.

My Lord,

You can very well imagine the abundant joy which I feel on the happy occasion of the completion of twenty-five years of the establishment of the Diocese of Kottar. I rejoice at the vast strides of progress which the Diocese, under the able, zealous and sagacious administration of your predecessor, Mgr. Lawrence Pereira, of happy memory and of Your Lordship, has made during this period. Its great achievements show how the prophetic words of Pope Leo XIII of venerable memory, "Filii tui, India, administri tibi salutis" are being fulfilled in a part of India, hallowed by the memories of the labours of India's second Apostle, St. Francis Xavier. Yours is the continuation and consolidation of the work of that great Saint, and I am fully confident that it will bear more and more fruits as time rolls by. It is noteworthy that in the progress that has been achieved, the Diocesan Clergy and the Religious Sisters with the help and hearty cooperation of the laity, have played a magnificient part, proving once again the reliance placed by Pope Benedict XV on the efficiency of the indigenous Clergy, in his historical Encyclical "Maximum illud". I am particularly glad that all this is happening in a suffragan Diocese of the Province over which I have, by the grace of God and favour of the Holy See, the privilege to preside, and witness the growth of a new diocese, whose first Bishop was consecrated by my predecessor.

May God bless Your Lordship, the Clergy and the laity of your Diocese, and enable you all and the succeeding generations to continue in ever increasing measure the work of the Diocese for the spiritual, moral and social advancement of the people, in that part of the Vineyard of the Lord, is my fervent prayer to God on this happy and great occasion. In union with Your Lordship, your Clergy, your Religious and your devoted people, I hope to celebrate a Mass of thanksgiving on the 28th instant in Villa Soccorso at the Shrine of Our Lady of Perpetual Succour.

With respectful wishes to Your Lordship and most cordially blessing the Clergy and laity of the Diocese in Our Lord,

I remain,
Yours very devotedly in Xt.,
(sd) † JOSEPH ATTIPETTY,
Archbishop of Verapoly.

H. E. THE MOST REV. DR. JOSEPH ATTIPETTY
Archbishop of Verapoly

RT. REV. JEROME FERNANDEZ
Bishop of Quilon.

Bishop's House,
Quilon,
Sept. 26, 1955.

Your Lordship,

I am very happy to learn that on the 28th inst., the Diocese of Kottar, bifurcated from the Diocese of Quilon, is completing a quarter century of its glorious existence. We have been closely watching the steady growth of healthy Catholic life in this sister Diocese of Kottar, as eloquently testified by the marvellous records of the Catholic population and yearly conversions as well as of the increasing number of priests, institutions and lay associations. During my recent tour abroad. more than once I had the opportunity of speaking in glowing terms of the all-round progress of the Diocese of Kottar.

This happy event of the completion of a quarter century of innumerable graces and blessings is indeed worthy of being commemorated. While cordially joining with Your Lordship, the Clergy and the Faithful in singing the praises of God for the marvelous success with which He has deigned to bless the Diocese, gladly do I offer Your Lordship and the whole Diocese my sincere felicitations and heartfelt wishes, assuring you of our continued prayers and hearty cooperation.

With best wishes and kind regards,
Yours devotedly in Jesus and Mary,
(sd) † ***Jerome Fernandez,***
Bishop of Quilon.

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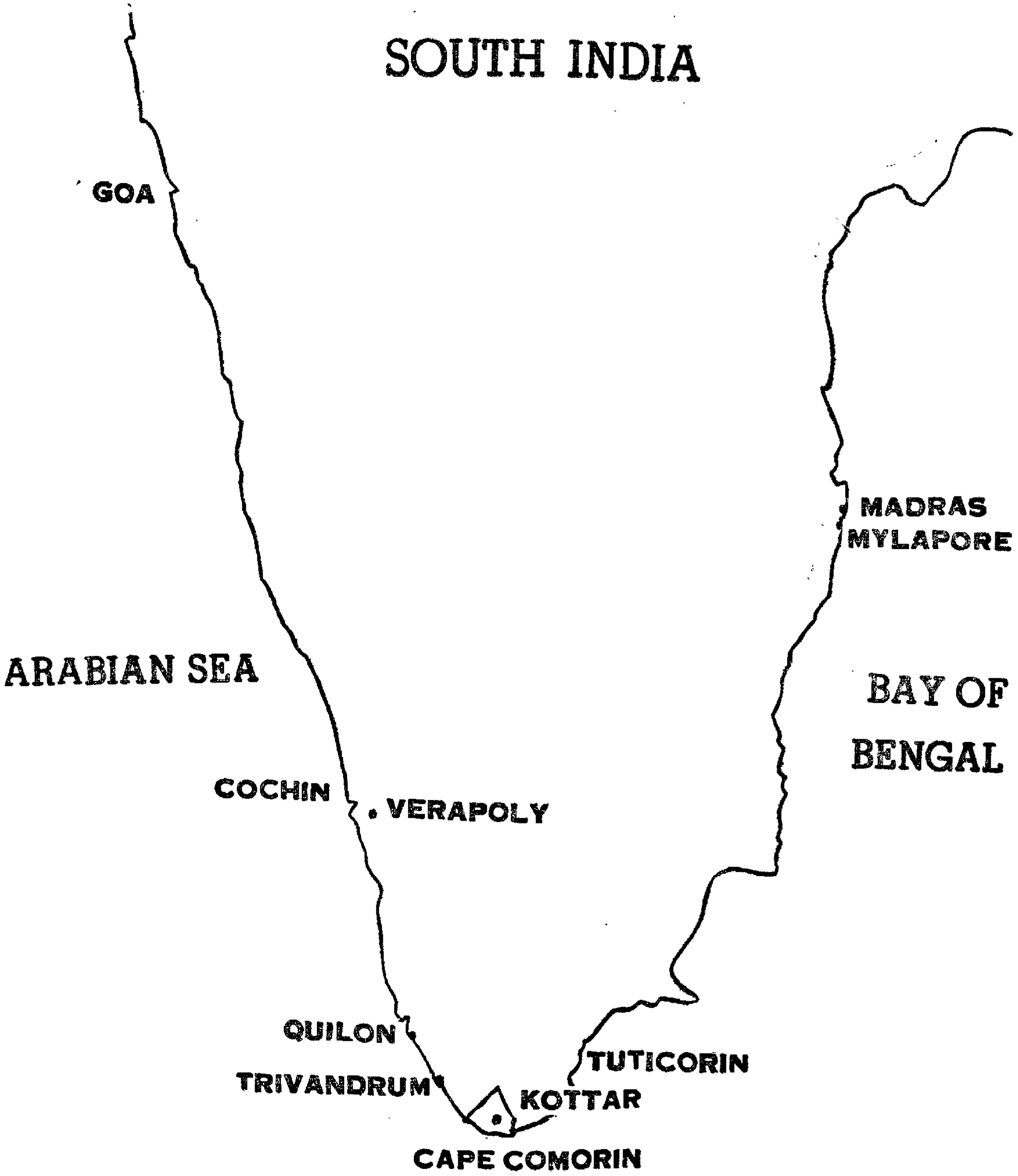
THE DIOCESE OF KOTTAR

PART I

THE DIOCESE IN THE MAKING

(From the earliest times to 1930)


SOUTH INDIA
GOA
MADRAS
MYLAPORE
ARABIAN SEA
BAY OF
BENGAL
COCHIN
VERAPOLY
QUILON
TUTICORIN
TRIVANDRUM
KOTTAR
CAPE COMORIN

PART I

The Diocese in the making

The Land and the People.

The Diocese of Kottar lies at the apex of the triangle which is modern Travancore, formed by the Arabian Sea on the West, and the Western Ghat Mountains on the East. Its territory of about 625 sq. miles is coextensive with the four taluqs, i. e. political subdivisions of Agasteeswaram (minus the parish of Azhagappapuram belonging to the Diocese of Tuticorin), Thovalai, Kalkulam and Vilavancode (minus seven villages along the Coast belonging to the Diocese of Trivandrum). This area includes about 250 sq. miles of uninhabited hills and forests.

The northern taluqs of Kalkulam and Vilavancode have been, for the most part, subject to the Maharaja of Travancore. The other two could easily be termed the cock-pit of the South. This was due to their geographical position between the two Kingdoms of Travancore and Madurai, connected by the convenient pass at Aralvaimozhy.

Tamil is the main language of the region, with some admixture of Malayalam towards the north. In fact, in the reorganisation of States according to language, these four Taluqs would go over to Madras, the Tamil State. The population consists of Arasars[1] and Paravars, mostly along the Coast, Nadars[2] forming a great majority in the interior, with minorities of Nayars, Vellalas, Brahmins and other castes.

What is the origin of Christianity in these parts? It is now generally held that the Apostle St. Thomas established the Church on the Malabar Coast, and died at Mylapore in Tamilnad. Did he come as far south as Cape Comorin, perhaps on his way to the Eastern Coast? There is neither tradition nor document to tell us anything. The Jacobites claim to have had a church at Thiruvithamcode in the taluq of Kalkulam from the very earliest times. This town must have been the ancient capital, as it has given its name to the whole State.[3]

Probably the first epigraphic evidence of Christianity so far unearthed was found on two stones dug up at Cape Comorin,[4] from which we learn that the Christians were given protection from their Hindu kinsmen, and some revenues were allotted to the church of St. Thomas. Of the dates, 1496 and 1526, found on the stones, the first definitely refers to a time prior to the landing of the Portuguese in India, raising interesting specula-

1 Termed Mucuvers in the old Christian documents
2 All the old Sources give the name of Sanars or Cianars to them
3 Travancore is but an Europeanised form of Thiruvithamcode. The final r is the Portuguese equivalent of the Tamil d, as in Tuticorin for Tutucudi.
4 The Travancore State Manual of Nagam Aiya, vol. II, p. 145 f.

tions as to who these Christians were—they were fishermen, as is evident from the stones—how they received the faith, how long ago and to what rite they belonged.

Nagam Aiya[5] asserts that in 1439 there were Christian communities scattered all the way from Cochin to Cape Comorin. Fr. Hosten goes further to say that such settlements were to be found from Karachi to Cape, and from Cape to Mylapore.[6] Many traces of pre-Portuguese Christianity are found in Goa. A painstaking search is sure to yield more such evidences in other parts as well. Nicolo de Conti wrote that there were (before 1437) a thousand "Nestorian heretics" at Mylapore, adding: "These Nestorians are scattered all over India, as the Jews among us..."[7] The Christians of Cape Comorin, enjoying the harbour dues in 1496, were perhaps of this Nestorian set[8]. The church at Kumari-Muttam, called Thommey-palli, may be the one alluded to, before 1516, by Duarte Barbosa: "At this Cape Comory there is an ancient church of the Christians, which was founded by Armenians who still direct it, and perform in it the Divine Services of Christians, and have crosses on the altars. The mariners pay it a tribute (the harbour dues?), and the Portuguese celebrate Mass there when they pass. There are many tombs, among which there is one which has written on it a Latin epitaph: Hic jacet Cataldus, Gulli filius, qui obiit anno..."[9] The date of the inscription is missing. Lord Stanley thinks it may refer to a pre-Portuguese traveller. The Armenians refered to by Duarte may also be Arameans or Syrians.[10]

Friar John de Marignoli of Florence, a Franciscan sent by Pope John XXII as his Legate to Peking landed at Quilon on his way back on Palm Sunday, 1348. He writes: "After I had been there (Quilon) some time,... I erected a stone as my landmark and memorial, in the corner of the world over against Paradise and anointed it with oil..."[11] Where was this pillar planted? The general opinion is that it was on a rock at Quilon.[12] But arguing from the words "corner of the world", and "over against Paradise", since Ceylon was known as the Island of Paradise, Fr. Hosten inclines to the opinion that this column was erected somewhere near the church at Kumari-Muttam.[13]

Conversion of Paravars

The opening of the sea-route to India round the Cape of Good Hope in 1498 gave occasion for greater and more steady Christian influence. Every ship brought its quota of zealous Missionaries, and in 1534 the Diocese of Goa was established by Pope Paul III, embracing within its jurisdiction the whole of the Eastern world.

It was just about this time that cruel persecutions by Muslims drove the Para-

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5 loc. cit.
6 H. Hosten S. J. : Antiquities from San Thome and Mylapore, the traditional site of the Martyrdom and tomb of St. Thomas the Apostle: Calcutta, 1936. Much of the following has been culled from this book. See also Ferroli S. J. : The Jesuits in Malabar, Vol. I, pp. 76, 79, 84.
7 Hosten: op. cit. p. 558.
8 Hosten: op. cit. p. 559.
9 Dames: The book of Duarte Barbosa: II, 102-103.
10 Brit. Mus Sloane. Ms. 2748, a. Fol. 2r 39r. Fr. G. Schurhammer S. J. in his "The Malabar Church and Rome", edited and published by Fr. Placid T. O. C. D., has this to say: "From one of the Syro-Malabarian students in Portugal, Barros obtained his information about St. Thomas Christians and Mar Jacob, of whom he writes:— A few years before our arrival in India, the Armenian Patriarch sent four Bishops, of whom two died soon on reaching India. The other two divided the land between themselves, the younger one taking the part from Quilon towards Cape Comorin, the older one residing in Cranganore..." (pp. 20 f. quoted in "The Latin and Syrian Hierarchies of Malabar" by V. A. Pascal, p. 15)
11 Ferroli: op. cit. p. 66; Hosten: op. cit. p. 455.
12 See Rev. M. D'Sa: History of the Catholic Church in India, Bombay, 1910: Vol. I, p. 17.
13 Hosten: op. cit. p. 560.

vars of the Pearl Fishery Coast to seek the protection of the Portuguese in Cochin. The protection was promised on condition that the Paravars agreed to embrace Christianity, and as a pledge of their good faith 85 leaders from all their villages went to Cochin, and were baptised there by Fr. Michael Vaz, the Vicar General of Goa, in the month of December, 1535. The parish-priest of Cochin with four other priests (probably Franciscans) was sent down to the Pearl Fishery Coast where, in the following year, about 20,000 were gathered by them into the fold of Christ.

There is no room to doubt that the Parava villages on the Arabian Sea-board too were the recipients of this signal favour from heaven. We can assert therefore that the first major planting of the Cross in the territory of the diocese of Kottar is to be dated from that year. The whole Mission was known as the Mission of Cape Comorin, as is evident from the letters of St. Francis Xavier. Besides there is a strong tradition that it was at the Cape that he landed on his first visit to the south, and was consoled to find a church there dedicated to Our Lady of Joy.[14]

The converts were yet to be instructed. Two Friars left on the Fishery Coast suffered both from their ignorance of Tamil and the inclemency of the weather, so that in a short time they made their way back to Cochin. When in response to the pressing demands of the Pope and of King John III of Portugal, Xavier was sent to the East, it was to be expected that he should be entrusted with the Cape Comorin Mission. He landed at the Cape in October 1542, and proceeded on foot to Tuticorin, visiting the villages on the way.[15]

After acquainting himself with the Tamil language and committing to memory the Creed, the Commandments and other prayers and formulas that he had translated, he spent more than a year going from village to village,[16] instructing, baptising, erecting churches and chapels, providing Catechists to carry on the work in his absence, and as occasion arose, succouring his people against the attacks of Vadugars (Badagas) and others.

Conversion of the Arasars

It was during his many visits to the Parava villages of Travancore that Xavier came in contact with the other fisher people, the Arasars. God in his inscrutable wisdom willed that they should be the next people of the south to give heed to the Gospel. Already in 1537 the Raja of Travancore had promised Fr. Michael Vaz to allow the conversion of the fishermen of his kingdom, as condition that the Portuguese would supply him with horses for his cavalry.[17]

Now in gratitude to Xavier for averting the invasion of the Vadugars, the Raja gave permission, and Xavier set to work without delay. Passing from village to village, he poured the saving water on about 10,000 Arasars. He complains happily in his letters that his throat became hoarse from pronouncing the formulas, and that he could scarcely lift his hands at the end of the day. In

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14 A. Brou, S. J.: Saint Francois Xavier, Paris, 1922: t. I, p. 187. Also: A Short Account of the Missions under the Charge of the Fathers of the Society of Jesus under the Malabar Province in the East Indies *written to the Most Rev. General of the Society in the year 1644*: printed in Trichinopoly. p. 18.

15 "St. Francis Xavier", Souvenir of the IV Centenary, Ernakulam, 1952: see Ch. on "Preparation for his Apostolate" by H. E. Bishop Arattukulam, D. D., D. C. L.: p. 5; and Ch. "On the Fishery Coast", by Rt. Rev. J. M. Villavarayan, Ph. D., S. T. L.: pp. 29, 30.

16 Villages along the Arabian Sea mentioned are: Cape Comorin, Covalam and Rajakamangalam. Schurhammer: The Clergy Review, June 1952: p. 176.

17 Schurhammer: Quellen, 211; Schurhammer-Wicki: Epistolae, I, p. 244, Note 1.

about a month he had almost completed his work. North to south, Poovar, Kollencode, Vallavilai, Thuthur, Poothurai (all now in the Diocese of Trivandrum), Thengapattanam, Enayam, Midalam, Vaniakudy, Colachel, Kadiapattanam, Muttam and Pallam were the villages named by the famous Fr. H. Henriquez, the companion and successor of Xavier.[18]

The next village awaiting baptism was Manakudy. But news reached Xavier of the horrible massacre of the Christians of Mannar, so that he was constrained to go at once to their rescue. Before leaving he wrote to Francis Mansilhas residing at Punnaikayal on the Pearl Fishery Coast, directing him to come over to Manakudy and baptise the people, giving him the distance from the Cape (about 5 miles to the north) and other detailed instructions.

When Xavier next visited the Cape Mission, he erected for the new Christians 20 churches, towards the cost of which his friend the Maharaja had given him 20,000 fanams.[19] Xavier greatly cherished his neophytes, and was ever mindful of them. Even when his missionary expeditions took him far away, he wrote repeatedly to the Fathers in the Mission, instructing, warning and exhorting them about their duties to these Christians. In one of his letters to Francis Mansilhas we read: "Visit the Christians who were converted on the Travancore coast and distribute there, as best as you can, those Malabar Fathers. See that they live well and chastely, labouring for the service of God and giving good example of themselves." It is interesting to know that these Malabar Fathers were the first Parava priests, Gaspar, Emmanuel and Coelho by name, who were clerics in the Seminary at Goa when the Saint first landed there. It is consoling to see that from the outset priests of Mother India have been active for the salvation of their nation. But at the same time it is to be noted that these early Fathers were put under the direction of Francis Mansilhas who was not yet a priest! This became the usage for a very long time, that Indian priests were always to labour under the rule and direction of European Missionaries.[20]

Travancore, a small State in the south, was then ruled by Venrumankonda Bhuthala Vira Sri Vira Kerala Varma, also known as Unni Kerala Varma, who was a friend of Xavier. It was in his favour that the Saint in 1544 met the Vadugar army of Vijayanagar under the command of the Viceroy of Madurai, the redoubtable Vithala, and with Crucifix in hand, forced it to retreat. What may not be so well known is that a similar incident was recorded in 1558 when Vithala attacked again in force. There were but a thousand men in the Travancore Army to stem the tide of six thousand that was rolling through the Aralvaimozhy pass. In his perplexity, the Raja turned to Fr. Perez, the Supperior of the Travancore Mission, who was then residing at Kalkulam, and asked for the assistance of prayers. No doubt he remembered and recounted the famous exploit of Xavier fourteen years before, and perhaps he hoped for a similar deliverance. His hopes were not ill-founded. Fr. Perez made his Christians pray. Then he sent a standard blazoned with the Holy Name of Jesus with instructions that it should be carried at the head of the army. Wonderfully heartened, the Travancoreans rushed upon the enemy, loudly invoking the name of Jesus. The invading army was panic-stricken and retreated in confusion, leaving many dead behind.[21]

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18 Schurhammer-Wicki: loc. cit. Note 2.
19 Lucena: Historia, lib. 2, cap. 17; "St. Francis Xavier" Centenary Souvenir: Ch. "On the Malabar Coast", by Bishop Arattukulam, pp. 54-58.
20 This seems to have been the policy for long!
21 H. Heras: Aravidu Dynasty of Vijayanagara: Madras, 1928: Vol. I, p. 162.

Before proceeding further, let us recall that Xavier had a residence at Kottar itself. This was necessary as Kottar was then the capital and main center of Venad, through which passed all the chief thoroughfares leading both to the Fishery Coast and to the Travancore sea-board. A strong tradition points to the small chapel of Our Lady near the Cathedral as the spot of his residence, where he used to offer the holy Sacrifice at an altar of the Bl. Mother.[22] It was and is situated in a village of Paravars. The Paravars and Arasars of the interior, whose main occupation was the transport and sale of fish caught by their kinsmen on the coast, were then commonly called Chavalakars. It is quite probable that a certain number of them embraced Christianity already in the time of St. Francis Xavier, not only at Kottar, but in the outlying villages as well. But the conversion of their majority was delayed to a later period. We know that both St. Francis and after him Fr. Henriquez expressed their hopes of easily converting them, provided more Missionaries were available for the work.

In 1557 Goa was raised to the dignity of an Archdiocese, with Cochin as its only suffragan. With Travancore and the Pearl Fishery Coast, the territory of Kottar passed to the jurisdiction of Cochin. Dom Georges Themudo, O.P., the second Bishop of Cochin, made a pastoral visitation of the south in 1566, and was received with great honour by the Christians.[23] He found the Cape Comorin Mission in a flourishing state. During the lent of 1582 as many as 1500 confessions were reported to have been made there.[24]

The Seventeenth Century

The new century opens with the formation of a Vice-Province of the Society of Jesus for Malabar in 1602, with head-quarters at Cochin, which helped to intensify missionary endeavour in Tamilnad. In 1605 it was raised to the status of a Province. The Society in those days was rather reluctant to admit Indians in its ranks. Yet we hear of the death in 1596 of Fr. Pero Luis at Cape Comorin. He was a Brahmin-convert, born at Quilon.[25] Later we come across a certain Fr. Toscano of the Malabar Province who was probably the first Jesuit from Tamilnad.[26]

Belonging to this Province there were 44 Christian villages with 36 churches from Quilon to Cape Comorin, a stretch of more than a hundred miles, with four Fathers of the Society looking after them. But there were some Secular priests to help them—how many, we do not know—who were of great assistance in maintaining the christian life of the people. Thus we hear of Fr. Jacob Cruz, a Malayali from Cochin, who was Vicar of Midalam.[27] Another was Fr. Francis Nunez who was Vicar at Kottar. To meet the great need of the pilgrims who used to flock to the Curusadi of Xavier, not yet canonized, he had dug a well there.[28] There was also Fr. Andreas Vaz, a Parava, who was Vicar at Cape Comorin, caring for all the villages up to Rajakamangalam.[29] All these details we gather from the Process of Canonization of Francis Xavier which was going on at the turn of the century.

The fame of Xavier was at its zenith in the south. A fine church dedicated to the Conversion of St. Paul had been built at

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22 This chapel was the only Indian Shrine of Our Lady represented at Rome at the Coronation of the Bl. Virgin by the Pope on November 11, 1954, at the proclamation of the Queenship of Mary.
23 L. Besse, S. J.: La Mission du Madure, Trichinopoly, 1914: p. 392.
24 L. Besse: op. cit. p. 396.
25 D. Ferroli: The Jesuits in Malabar: Vol. II: p. 283.
26 D. Ferroli: The Jesuits in Malabar: Vol. I, p. 287.
27 Monumenta Xaveriana: tom. II, Matriti, 1912: p. 493.
28 id. p. 479.
29 id. p. 559.

Kottar.[30] As usual there was a Curuzadi in front of it, in which Fr. Andreas Buccerio S. J. had placed an image of Xavier. Soon miracles were reported there, and it became a centre of pilgrimage, so that it came to be called "Saveriar Curuzadi".[31]

Though the Maharaja of Travancore was very friendly towards the Fathers, contributing yearly a sum of Rs. 100 'paradaos' to the Rector of Quilon and to the Vicar of the Church at Thengapattanam,[32] persecutions and tribulations were not wanting to test and strengthen the faith of the new Christians. Already in the time of Xavier they were repeatedly exposed to the depredations of the Naiks of Madurai, and to the continuous harassments of Muslims resenting the intrusion of the Portuguese in the coastal regions. In 1604 there occurred on 29th April an eclipse of the sun. This occasioned great fright among the populace. The Hindu gurus hastened to assure Sri Vira Ravi Varma, the Maharaja (1595-1607) that it was a sign of the displeasure of the gods against the spread of Christianity in his kingdom. Much against his wish, he ordered the destruction of all the churches, entrusting the work to the neighbouring Nadars. More than 40 churches were burnt down, to the great affliction of the Christians and their pastors. The church at Kottar was spared because of the great fame for sanctity of the shrine of Xavier.

Fr. Andreas Buccerio, Superior of the Cape Mission, and Fr. Nicholaus Spinola, Rector of Quilon, hastened to the Maharaja, and pleaded their cause so well that he was moved to compunction, ordered all the churches to be rebuilt, himself contributing generously towards the expenses.[33]

With the establishment of the Diocese of Cochin, friction between the Bishop and the Jesuits had been gradually increasing on matters of jurisdiction. It reached such proportions that in 1608 the Jesuits voluntarily vacated all their parishes on the Pearl Fishery Coast. It seems as though this did not happen in Travancore. In fact, we hear that Fr. A. Buccerio received the Bishop, Frey Andre de S. Maria, O. S. F., at Cape Comorin, who was on his way to the Fishery Coast to eject the Jesuits by force![34]

In mid-century, exactly a hundred years after the conversion of the Arasars, the state of Christianity in this territory was as follows:[35]

Name of Village	Number of Christians
1. Thengapattanam	c. 800
2. Enayam	500
3. Periya Midalam	313
4. Chinna Midalam	314
5. Vaniakudy	115
6. Kurumbanay	270
7. Colachel	437
8. Puthur	207
9. Kadiapattanam	872
10. Tope	340
11. Muttam	244
12. Rajakamangalam	640
13. Periacad	460
14. Pallam	370
15. Manakudy	660
16. Covalam	513
17. Cape Comorin	364

The seventeenth century saw also the rise of Dutch power in India. Strongly anti-Catholic, they exposed the faithful to great trials, beginning with the Pearl Fishery Coast

30 id. p. 506.
31 id. pp. 581, 589, 591.
32 Ferroli: op. cit. Vol. I, p. 283.
33 Besse: op. cit. p. 696 f; Nagam Aiya: Travancore State Manual: t. I, p. 301.
34 Ferroli: Jesuits in Malabar: I, p. 325.
35 G. Schurhammer: Die Taufen des hl. Franz Xaver: Rome, 1952: p. 72.

where they had established themselves by 1658. What affected most the church in Travancore was the fall of Cochin in 1663, so that both the Bishop and the Jesuit Provincial of Malabar had to flee. The Province was almost destroyed. Fathers had to hide in far away villages. The College at Quilon was razed to the ground, though the Fathers there were greatly esteemed by the Maharaja and were under his protection. The kingdom of Travancore was comparatively free from the Dutch, especially in the south, so that soon the Provincial shifted his head-quarters into it. The first place chosen there was Tope, where a mud hut was built in 1667, in sad contrast to the splendours of the Residence at Cochin![36]

Where was this Tope? From the list of parishes given above it seems that it was somewhere between Kadiapattanam and Muttam; there is a vague tradition that it was not on the beach, but more to the interior. However be it, its name is inherited by the present Pillaitope. It was to Tope then that St. John de Britto came, to meet the Provincial, in 1682 and again five years later.[37] In course of time, a decent church was built, with some out-houses, for the convenience of the many Fathers coming to visit the Provincial. Some time before 1700 a college was erected there, to replace the one destroyed at Quilon. It was probably but a school for the formation of Catechists.[38]

Conversion of Nadars

As stated before, a good majority of the population in South Travancore belong to the Nadar caste. In speaking of their conversion, we shall take Fr. Besse S. J. as our guide, greatly summarising what he has to say from page 696 to 719 of his monumental work: La Mission du Madure. Fr. Ferroli's condensed narrative can be read in the second volume of "The Jesuits in Malabar," pages 353 to 364.

Fr. Besse asserts that to the end of the 17th century the Nadars were all Hindus, alleging that "the first Missionaries of the Fishery Coast and the Travanore Coast either did not try to convert them, or failed completely." It might be that there were some isolated cases of conversion among them. For example, a story goes that a certain Christian Nadar woman named Santhai came with her husband Gnanamuthu from Topuvilay, near Anakarai in Tinnevely District, to Vadakankulam about 1680, erected a Curusadi thus, beginning the mission there.[39]

The first conversions among the Nadars in Travancore were made by Fr. Peter Morato before 1697. Fr. Besse says this on the authority of a letter of Fr. Antonio Barandolini, dated October 20, 1713. But we have been unable to find out any other details about him or his work.

In 1698 the Provincial Fr. Andrew Gomez, during his visitation of Travancore, expressed dissatisfaction with the neglect of the great masses of people of the interior. It was decided to entrust the work to Fr. Jean Maynard, who was then in charge at Kottar. Accordingly he put on the dress of an Indian Sannyasi and began his mission. He succeeded in baptising some Nayars. But when they saw him mingling indiscriminately with 'lower' castes, teaching and baptising all, they deserted in a body, and refused to meet him any more.

On hearing this the good Fr. Provincial was greatly saddened at heart. He ordered prayers for the success of the Mission, and convoked a general Council of the Fathers

36 Ferroli: op. cit. II, p. 259f.
37 id. pp. 81, 83.
38 id. p. 260 f.
39 Besse: op. cit. p. 694.

to discuss and decide future policy. It was agreed that the only hope was in adopting the methods of the great Fr. Robert de Nobili as closely as possible, by which the Father in charge of the 'higher' castes would seggregate himself completely from the intercourse of the 'lower' castes and even of their pastors, eschew all but vegetable food, and live a complete life of renunciation and mortification. Fr. Bernard de Saa, who had some experience of this method, was called away from the Marava country in Madurai and entrusted with this work, Fr. Maynard continuing to be at Kottar to render him all possible assistance.

Mission of Marungoor

Fr. de Saa, after due consideration chose Vadakankulam as his first headquarters. As it was situated on the border of the two kingdoms of Madurai and Travancore, he thought it would be useful in avoiding persecution from either side. Then with the permission of the local petty-chief, Chiruvalipillay, he built a church and house at Marungoor, which was then a rather populous village, about five miles due east of Kottar. To this center he brought some Christians to form the nucleus of the new Malabar Mission.[40] It was in the year 1699.

The new Mission was from the very beginning beset with persecutions. In 1700 rains failed. The superstitious people attributed this to the anger of the gods because of the erection of the christian church. They threatened to burn down the church if rains did not come before a fixed date. Fr. de Saa exhorted his people to implore the assistance of God. The eve of the day arrived. The sky was clear with no signs of rain. But during the night there was a great downpour, and the church was saved. Later, the Hindus demanded that the Christians should take part in the temple-car festival, as they had been doing before their conversion, threatening dire consequences if they did not. Again the neophytes had recourse to prayer. Some how the festival did not take place at all. But these and similar public and private threats and troubles had their effect on the new Christians, so that a number of them apostatised.

Fr. Saverio Borghese joined Fr. de Saa in 1701. He was inspired to penetrate deeper into Travancore, and started a Mission at Nemam (now in the Diocese of Trivandrum). With the help of Sathianathan, a good and tried Catechist dressed as a Pandaram, he succeeded in baptising many, including a Hindu guru, a minister of the Maharaja, and the governor of Nemam himself. But his success was short-lived. The first of converts died, soon after, of blood-poisoning, and as usual ascribing this to conversion, many recanted. But all was not lost, and gradually the Church grew.

The Nadars were eager for the faith and came in their hundreds. This alarmed their chiefs. With the permission of the local chief, representing the ruler of Madurai, they fell upon the Christians, forcing them to return to the gods, with tortures and expoliations. Hands and feet were burnt, and other cruelties perpetrated on the hapless Christians. But they had recourse to prayer and the Sacraments, and encouraged by the Fathers, the vast majority of them held firmly to their faith. In exasperation, the Nadar chiefs determined to do away with the Fathers. But in the meantime, an appeal had been made to the Naik of Madurai who promptly ordered his chief to put an end to the persecution.

Bawlked of their prey in the kingdom of Madurai (to which Marungoor seems to have belonged), the Nadar chiefs carried their vendetta over to Travancore. The usurper

40 Fr. de Saa himself describes all this in a letter dated Oct. 14, 1713: Besse, p. 698.

Rama Raja was then on its throne. The Fathers at Tope in the Provincial House were accused of building forts there to help the English, and of hiding arms and ammunition in the church. Besides, were they not immensely rich, with gold and treasures buried in their house? His fear and cupidity thus aroused, the Raja sent a detachment of soldiers, who with the help of a huge rabble of Nadars, broke into the College and burnt and destroyed the church and the houses. The Fathers could save nothing from the holocaust. They were ordered to quit. This happened some time at the end of 1704 or the beginning of 1705. The letter of the Provincial, Fr. Christophe Semedo, dated 7th October, 1705, relating all these sad happenings, concludes triumphantly: "The number of conversions, however, has not diminished".

As neither arms nor treasures were to be found at Tope, the Raja realised that he had been cheated by the Nadar chiefs. But he took no action against them. Nor did he make restitution to the Fathers. Nay more, he refused permission for the Church and House to be rebuilt. The Provincial therefore shifted his headquarters to Colachel. But as the house there was too inadequate, he soon migrated to Rajakamangalam. At this time there were well-built churches at Colachel, Rajakamangalam and Kadiapattanam. The last was completely destroyed and pillaged by the Mopplahs (Muslims) in 1712. [41]

In 1705 Fr. Borghese was replaced by Fr. Peter Martin at Marungoor. During his stay of three years great numbers of Nadars were converted. It led to further persecutions, this time instigated, it seems by the priests of the temple at Suchindrum. The church was looted. But through the influence of Fr. Martin part of the loot was recovered. We also hear that in 1705 a church under construction at Asaripallam two, miles to the west of Kottar, was burnt down, as also the church that was being rebuilt at Nemam. Sad to relate, there were many defections among the Nayars at Nemam. Again the cause was caste and untouchability! They had learnt from the ubiquitous Muslims that the Fathers, though dressed differently, were of the same kind as those working along the coast, teaching the same doctrines and performing the same ceremonies.

Progress and Persecutions

All the new missions of the interior had been under the Mission of Madurai. But in consideration of the phenomenal growth of the Church, Nemam was erected into an independent Mission in 1708, with the churches at Marungoor and Vadakankulam included in it. Opposition and persecution was its lot all through its existence. In the time of Fr. Simon de Carvalho (1708—1709), another persecution was let loose because some Christians had killed a snake! It was at this time too that the church at Ramanadichemputhur, as well as the house at Marungoor, were totally destroyed by fire. There were then about 3000 adult Christians, of whom about 300 were of the 'high' caste (probably Vellalas). Many of them were well instructed in the faith, though others were too ignorant to take in more than the very rudiments. Fr. Carvalho could not remain long at Marungoor, as he was chosen by Mgr. Laynez S. J., the new Bishop of Mylapore, to accompany him as his companion and councellor. Fr. Martin came back, and built an Oratory to replace the burnt church.

Fr. Bernard de Saa returned to the Mission to replace Fr. Martin. In Nemam he was able to baptise many of the 'high' caste. But the climate was a great trial to him, so that he shifted to a new residence at a place

41 Ferroli: Jesuits in Malabar, Vol. II: p. 261 f. Letter of Fr. Antonio Brandolini of 1713.

which he named Sarvavalicodu (=the hill of the Omnipotent), near a village called Valliodu or Veliur (-is it near Mulagumudu?-) where Fr. Maynard had erected a church.

In 1712 the third persecution at Marungoor was under way. The Nadar chiefs, resentful of the numerous conversions from among them, bought over to their side the local Travancore chieftains, called Madambimars, (the region had evidently passed over to the rule of Travancore), got up an army, broke into the houses of the Christians, robbed, threatened and beat all. But in vain. The Christians suffered all for their faith, and gradually the storm blew away.

The number of converts was fast increasing, so that another priest, Fr. Anthony Tavares was assigned to the Mission in 1713. More than 4000 belonged to the three centers in Travancore, and the number would have been greater still but for the constant wars of the times.

Apart from the Christians belonging to the Nemam Mission, there were others in the interior of the country, among the Chavalakars or fisher folk. Those at Attoor, Eraniel and Thiruvithamcode were old Christians. Others were newly baptised by Fr. Maynard at the end of the 17th century. In 1713 there were 24 villages of Christian Chavalakars, with about 1000 adults. At Thiruvithamcode there was an old church dedicated to the Assumption of the Bl.Virgin.[42] The church at Eraniel was built on European model, while others were Indian, with mud walls and thatched roofs. But most of these Christians were not well-instructed, till the arrival of Fr. Joseph Vieyra, a zealous young priest. But he was sent away, universally regretted, to Madurai at the end of 1713, and was cedrepla by Fr. Bernard Gomez.

About these Christians we have the following in a letter of the Rector of Thiruvithamcode, Fr. Luiz Rodrigues, dated 5th November, 1717: "At Nemam the high caste, frightened by the threat of the Magistrates, do not come any more to be instructed. The humble tribe of the Nadars, from which one hoped great fruits, have been subject to great persecutions. That is why they do not come as formerly to be regenerated in the waters of baptism. Hence only two Pandaram Fathers suffice to cultivate the Mission; two other Fathers, dressed in European fashion, go up and down the country to visit the Paravars who live scattered in the interior. Some are old Christians; some are new converts...."[43]

Christianity was flourishing along the Coast. By comparison with the population of 1616, there is growth everywhere. The state of population in 1716 is:-[44]

	Village	Population
1.	Thengapattanam	944
2.	Enayam	946
3.	Periya Midalam	482
	Chinna Midalam	419
4.	Vaniakudi	237
5.	Kurumbanay	273
6.	Colachel	1097
7.	Puthur	479
8.	Kadiapattanam	586
9.	Tope	869
10.	Muttam	375
11.	Rajakamangalam	584
12.	Periyacad	229
13.	Puthenthurai	559
14.	Pallam	349
15.	Manakudy	593
16.	Covalam	536
17.	Cape Comorin	c. 500

42 Now it is dedicated to the Ascension of Our Lord.
43 Ferroli: Jesuits in Malabar, Vol. II, p. 362. By Paravars is meant Chavalakars in general.
44 Schurhammer: Die Taufen den hl. Franz Xaver: p. 72.

Devasahayam Pillay, Martyr

Persecution was the constant lot of the new Christians of the Nemam Mission. Edifying examples of great fortitude and constancy among men and women, young and old, are narrated by the Missionaries in their letters. Add to this the horrors of frequent wars from abroad and from within the State. It was the time of the "Ettaray Yogam" and the "Ettuveettu Pillaimar", feudal chiefs, more powerful than the Maharaja. Madurai was also a constant threat from the East, while the Dutch were menacing frốm the sea on the West. Life and property were never safe, even for the strongest. In such unsettled times, the poor Christians could be harassed by their own kinsmen, and by petty chiefs, with no one to appeal to, or come to their aid. Any small pretext was enough to bring down the vengeance of the gods. But the grace of God was strong in them, and the infant Church flourished, to grow into a mighty tree, as far as the Nadar converts were concerned. The same may not be said of the Nayars. Their main center, Nemam, dwindled almost to nothing, so that it is but a name now, and the number of Nayar Christians has become quite negligible. This was perhaps the result of the conversion of Devasahayam Pillay and of his martyrdom.

The energetic Fr. Tavares died, aged only 38, at Colachel (c. 1725). It was there that Fr. John Baptist Buttari passed his final examination in Theology (1739), and was posted to Nemam, where in 1741 he made his final vows. He chose Vadakankulam as his headquarters and laboured in the Mission uninterruptedly for ten long years. It is from him that we learn the truth of the martyrdom of Devasahayam Pillay.

The Dutch were defeated in a decisive battle at Colachel, on August 10, 1741. Among those captured was the Catholic soldier E. B. de Lannoy. He entered into service with the Maharaja, Martanda Varma, whom he helped in reorganising the army on European lines and constructing a strong fort at Padmanabapuram, the capital. It was this army that won many a victory, to bring the whole of present day Travancore under the rule of Martanda Varma.

Captain de Lannoy was the instrument of Providence in bringing the gift of faith to Nilakanta Pillay, a Nayar of high standing at Court, who was later baptised by Fr. Buttari at Vadakankulam, with the name of Lazarus, or in Tamil, Devasahayam. The glorious martyrdom of Devasahayam Pillay is too well-known to be told at length here. The fact cannot be denied, as Fr. Buttari himself has described it in many letters.

Devasahayam Pillay was apprehended on 23rd February, 1749, and kept in different prisons for three long years of untold suffering and torture, borne with heroic patience and fortitude. Simultaneously pressure was brought to bear upon the Christians of Nemam. Perhaps we have to date the defection, almost complete, of the Nayars to this period. As for the Nadar Christians, many wavered and abjured. But most of them returned to the Church later.

While under custody at Peruvilai, Devasahayam Pillay was often visited by Fr. Thomas de Fonseca, the Vicar at Kottar, from whom he repeatedly received the Sacraments. He spent his captivity in prayer and meditation. Crowds of Christians from the Coast came to visit him, as much to console as to be consoled. For he did not fail to instruct them in the glories of the Faith and the happiness of suffering for it. Many miracles are said to have been wrought at his intercession, not the least of which was his power to bring many apostates back to the Church.

Finally on 14th January, 1752, he was taken to the eastern border of the kingdom to a hill called Kattadi Malai, near the pass at Aralvaimozhi, and there was shot dead. He

was but forty years old. He had been a Christian for seven years. A few bones, left after the wild animals had their fill, were carefully gathered and brought to Kottar, where they were solemnly interred within the church.

On hearing the news, Dom Clemente S.J., Bishop of Cochin, ordered a solemn Te Deum to be sung in all the churches of his Diocese, while he himself presided over the function in the Cathedral at Cochin, and preached a glowing eulogy of the Martyr. [45]

The place of his execution continues to draw large crowds of pilgrims to this day, while the church where his bones were laid to rest is today the Cathedral of Kottar. The place outside the Puliyurkurichi Fort, near Padmanabapuram, where he suffered great tortures, was for long known as Devasahayam Kurusadi. [46]

Suppression of the Society of Jesus

In Europe the Society of Jesus was under severe trials. Calumnies were spread abroad by the French Encyclopædists. Pombal, the Chief Minister of Portugal, was their sworn enemy. Through his successful machination the Jesuits were banished in 1759 from all Portuguese territories. This outrageous order reached India in 1761. All the Jesuits directly under Portuguese rule were rounded up and sent to prison in Lisbon. Those who were outside their reach continued their ministry. But the worst was to come. In 1773, by order of Pope Clement XIV, the Society of Jesus was suppressed. The few Fathers who were working in these parts continued with a heavy heart, no more members of the Society, but each on his own, with no resources, and no new arrivals to help or replace them.

An incomplete document taken from "Mitras Lusitanas no Oriente" by C. C. Nazareth (Lisbon Ed. 1894), and quoted by Fr. Ferroli,[47] gives the names of the residential parishes at the time of the Suppression as: Colachel, Kadiapattanam, Sta. Luzia (Puthur), Tope, Rajakamangalam Covalam and Cape Comorin along the Coast, with Kottar, Canjiracode etc. in the interior, not counting 14 churches in the Nemam Mission (all told, in Travancore and Madurai). Who were the Fathers still working in these parishes? Fr. Tommassini, the last Jesuit in the Mission of Nemam, died in 1775. There was Fr. Antonio Peyrotto at Kottar,[48] and in 1780 we hear of Fr. Aloysius Falcao at Thiruvancode.[49]

It was about this time that a terrible persecution of the Nadar Christians was started by Naganpilla Sarvadiacaran, the Plenipotentiary of the Raja. Frey Paolino a S. Bartalomeo, the Carmelite Visitor to Malabar (1779—1789), writes of it in his monumental work, "India Orientalis Christiana".[50] All were to pay homage to the idol, Padmanaba Swamy, or surrender all their wealth. No less than 20,000 (?) Christians ran away to the mountains. About 300 were arrested from Vanganur, Thuckalay and Thiruvancode. Though a few yielded to his threats, the great majority, men, women and children, stood firm. The soldiers, finding little of worth in the wretched huts of the poor Christians, dragged them before the

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45 For an Account of Devasahayam Pillay, see Ferroli: Jesuits in Malabar, Vol. II, pp. 367-372; Besse: op. cit. pp. 724-726.
46 Madras Catholic Directory and General Annual Register for 1871: Madras, 1870: p. 161.
47 Ferroli: op. cit. Vol. II, p. 533.
48 Besse: op. cit. p. 478.
49 Ferroli: op. cit. p. 552.
50 He was in great repute at the Travancore Court. His portrait is still kept at the Padmanabapuram Palace. For details of the persecution, see his work, pp. 168-174, summarised in Ferroli, op. cit. pp. 552-554.

judge, called "Melvisarippu." Ten men were hung up on trees and cruelly beaten, in the presence of their wives and children. Two died the same day. A boy named Arulappan (John), but ten years of age, hearing the groans of his father, said to the judge: "If my father's faith is a crime, I too am guilty. Why then don't you beat me with him?" The judge took him at his word and tormented him. But the little boy only whispered "Jesu Nather Swami" (Jesus my Lord) at every stroke. He was nearly dead when released. "Have you had enough?" he was taunted. "You can beat me as long as you wish, but you will never rob me of my Saviour" was the brave reply. Next day they were all beaten again., and their torn bodies rolled on the burning sand, with powdered pepper rubbed into the wounds. But to no avail. They were all shut up in prison. Fr. Falcao was a tower of strength to the afflicted Christians.

Frey Paolino was at the time at Padmanabapuram, and staying at a small chapel nearby. The imprisoned Christians managed to contact him, and begged him to present a petition to the Maharaja.[51] In it they profess their readiness to do any work, or to pay any tribute to the Raja, provided they were set free and allowed the free exercise of their religion. The good Carmelite, who had considerable influence with the Maharaja, finally persuaded the Minister to stop the persecution. After three very painful months the Christians were allowed to return to their homes. But they never recovered their possessions!

By 1800 nearly all the ex-Jesuits in these parts were dead. By the time the Society was restored, the Mission had been entrusted to other Clergy, so that it is practically the last that we hear of the Jesuits in this territory. Before taking leave of them, it may be good to record the appraisal of their work by Mgr. Laouenaun, of the Foreign Mission of Paris.[52] He wrote: "Among the best institutions of the old Portuguese Missionaries in India, it is proper to put the parochial system. From the mouth of the Indus to Cape Comorin, and from Cape Comorin to the Ganges, all the Christianities founded by them were immediately organised as parishes, at the head of which was placed a native priest, and that was surely one of the causes of their stability. Each church had its independence, its revenues, its administrative council. The priest, the school–master, the sacristan, etc. were all maintained by the revenue of the church, and the system continues more or less to the present day. That there are little thefts and losses is inevitable, but the institution is sound, and it has withstood all these and greater trials."

Then he goes on to deplore the want of capacity, knowledge and virtue of most of the priests who succeeded the Jesuit Missionaries. In fact matters were not moving along smoothly in Travancore, so that about this time we hear of a letter sent by the Raja Rama Varma to the Vicar Apostolic of Verapoly, Fra Carlos de San Conard, complaining that the Christians in his Kingdom were subjected to unjust exactions on the part of the priests, and demanding that they should be replaced by others who would follow the example of the earlier Missionaries. Frey Paolino again interfered, in an attempt to improve matters. But of course the priests could not be removed except by their own Bishop of Cochin, who was then away in Goa. The relations between the Padroado and the Propaganda were already becoming strained.[53]

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51 See Ferroli: op. cit. p. 596 for an English translation of this interesting petition.
52 Ferroli: op. cit. p. 543.
53 Ferroli, op. cit. Vol. II, p. 571 f.

Franciscans and Others: 1773—1838

After the Suppression, the Franciscans, who had long established themselves at Quilon, were asked to look after a strip of the Travancore and Fishery Coasts, and also a part of the Marava kingdom in Madurai, in all 16 Residences. But in 1774 due to some dispute with the Administrator of the diocese of Cochin, Gætano Francisco de Couto, they were removed from these parishes. Through the influence of the Maharaja of Travancore and a Royal Decree from Portugal dated April 28, 1777, they were asked to return. But the opposition of the Administrator was still active, so that they could not take possession of all Jesuit Residences. In the territory under review they had but three parishes.[54]

1. the parish of Morale Grande, dedicated to the Holy Ghost, having 317 Parishioners, to which were subject the chapel of the Most Bl. Trinity at Morale Pequeno, with 360 souls, Holy Cross at Enayam with 800, St. Anthony at Icaputhenthuray with 520, St. Ignatius at Kurumbanay and St. James at Vaniakudy with 634. The name of the priest in charge is given as Fr. Anthony de Jesu Maria (The two Morales are Kil-Midalam and Mel-Midalam respectively).

2. the parish of Puthenthuray, with 920 souls, and a chapel dedicated to St. Mathew at Pallam. Fr. Anthony de Concecao was the priest in charge.

3. the parish of St. Andrew at Manakudy, with 900 parishioners, with St. Ignatius at Covalam with 550, and Our Lady of the Redemption of Captives (N. S. de Merces) at Cape Comorin with 500. Fr. Joseph de S. Joachim, in charge there, was asked to leave in 1788 with some other Franciscans, perhaps due to the Padroado-Propaganda trouble, and to some questions which arose between the Bishop of Cochin and the Raja of Travancore.

This accounts for but three of the parishes of the coast. Who were in charge of the other parishes there and in the interior? They were probably Portuguese, or perhaps Goan priests. But of their names and activities we have been so far unable to get any details.[55]

The Franciscans themselves had to leave in 1835; for the Royal Decree from Portugal of May 28th 1834, expelling all Religious Orders from the Portuguese possessions was executed in India on 24th March of the following year.[56] When in June 1838 two new Missionaries of the restored Society of Jesus, Frs. Martin and Mousset, came to Cape Comorin, they were warmly welcomed by the Christians who had not seen a priest for more than three years. But they were ordered off by the English Resident in Travancore, (was it because they were Frenchmen)? and they had to proceed northward to Kuttapuly.[57]

Vicariate Apostolic of Verapoly (Carmelites)

Portugal had enjoyed the Royal Padroado, or the right of Patronage, from the beginning of its conquests overseas, by which the Most Catholic Majesty had the

54 Fr. Achilles Meersman O. F. M.: The Friars Minor or the Franciscans in India, 1291-1941: Rotti Press, Karachi, 1943: pp. 84 ff.

55 From a tombstone at Kottar, in the small chapel of Our Lady, we see that Fr. Aleixo de Souza was at Kottar from 1779 to 1823 when he died.

56 Meersman, op. cit. p. 105.

57 Besse, op. cit. p. 480.

right of nominating Bishops to the various Sees. But in course of time, as the Missionary territories grew in number and extent, and simultaneously the Portuguese power was restricted by the Dutch, the French and the English, and even destroyed, it became practically impossible for Portugal to supply all the Missionaries necessary for the work of evangelization. Add to this the religious persecutions and troubles in the Home Country, as seen in the expulsion of the Jesuits and later of all Religious. The Holy See had, in the meantime, established a separate Congregation "de Propaganda Fide" to supervise all Missionary endeavours of the Church. This Congregation had the sacred duty of finding ways and means to fill up the deficiencies and vacancies in the Missions. By a series of Briefs from 1833 the Holy See established the Apostolic Vicariates of Madras, Bengal, Ceylon and the Coromandel. There was great opposition to this move, which crystallised into the so-called Indo-Lusitanian Schism, as most of the Portuguese and Goan Clergy in India refused to admit the validity of the new set-up, and continued to exercise jurisdiction in territories placed exclusively under the Apostolic Vicars.[58]

For long the See of Cochin for the Latins and that of Cranganoor for the Syro-Chaldeans were either vacant or could not be effectively administered through the interference of the Dutch. After long and patient negotiations, the two Sees were suppressed in April, 24, 1838, by the Bull "Multa Praeclara" of Pope Gregory XVI, and all their territories were placed under the jurisdiction of the Vicar Apostolic of Verapoly. Originally known as the Vicariate of Malabar, it was established in 1659 and entrusted to the Discalced Carmelites in an effort to reunite the dissident Syro-Chaldeans who had revolted against the Archbishop of Cranganore. The territory of the present Diocese of Kottar thus passed into the Vicariate of Verapoly. As was to be expected, there was great opposition, and factions arose and fights broke out in parishes where the former vicars were still in possession. The new Carmelite Missionaries had to work hard and long to get possession of many a church and parish. Kottar itself submitted to the Vicar Apostolic only in 1842.[59]

Quilon.

The Vicariate of Verapoly was provisionally divided, in May, 12th 1845, into three: Verapoly, Mangalore in the north and Quilon in the south. All the territory to the south of the River Ranni was constituted into the Vicariate of Quilon. Rt. Rev. Bernardine Baccinelli of S. Teresa O. C. D. was the first Vicar Apostolic. We have in the Archives of Quilon an interesting Catalogue of the churches, Parishes and population "of the Diocese of Cochin, from Cape to Krishnapuram," for the year 1847. Does this mean that it was in that year only that the Carmelite Missionaries were able to take possession of their territory from the priests of Cochin? Whatever be the explanation, the Catalogue gives us an idea of the state of the Church in these parts when the Carmelites took over. In abridged form, the relevant details found in the list are:—

58 For a complete study, see Ernest Hull S. J.: Bombay Mission History, in 2 vols. Examiner Press Bombay.
59 V. A. Pascal: The Latin and Syrian Hierarchies of Malabar. 1937: p. 139.

	Parishes				Population
1.	Cape Comorin	: with the present parishes of Covalam and Manakudi—in all	4	villages	2536
2.	Puthenthuray	: with Pallam and Rajakamangalam	6	,,	2484
3.	Pillatope	: with Muttam and Kadiapattanam	6	,,	2458
4.	Colachel	: with Puthur and Kodimunay	4	,,	2566
5.	Kurumbanay	: with Midalam and Vaniakudy	5	,,	1384
6.	Thengapattanam	: with Enayam and Puthenthuray	4	,,	1698
7.	Kottar	: with Ramanadichemputhur, Mathal, Curusadi, Mel and Kil Asaripallams, Madathattuvilai etc.	87	,,	6515
8.	Carangadu	: with Eraniel, Manguly, Mulagumudu, Manalikarai, Puthenkadai, Matravilai, Alanji, Palayakadai, Mullanginavilai, Thiruvancodu etc.	127	,,	7873
9.	Vengodu	: with Puthukadai, Kallikkavilai, Kuzhithurai, Parachalai etc.	55	,,	2780

Of these, the first six are on the Coast, and the rest in the interior. After making allowance for the few villages that are now in the diocese of Trivandrum, thirty thousand could be taken as the population of Catholics in the territory under review.

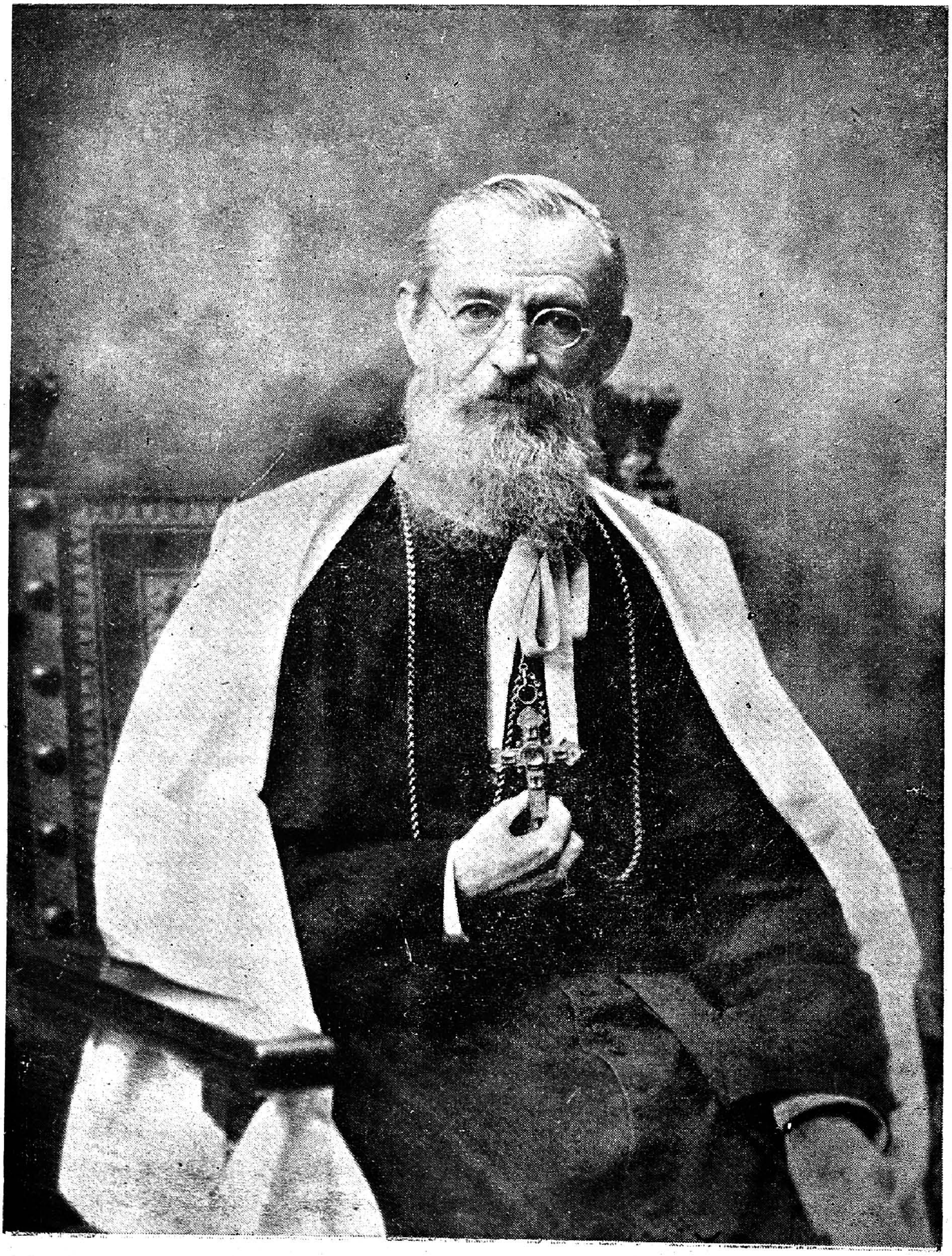
The separation of the Vicariate of Quilon from Verapoly was finally confirmed on 15th March, 1853. Discalced Carmelites of the Belgian Province were put in charge of the Mission. There were besides some Diocesan priests, both of the Latin and Syro-Chaldean rites. Thus in 1870, the four parochial districts of the interior were manned by four Carmelites with an additional one at Kottar. But along the Coast, of the five parishes, Carmelites were in two only. A diocesan Latin priest, and two Syrians were in charge of the other three.[60] We hear of Fr. Anthony Kathanar, evidently a Syrian, at Cape Comorin in 1865. It is also well-known that many were working in the Northern Districts of Quilon till recent times.

When on 1st September, 1886 Pope Leo XIII established the Hierarchy in India, Quilon was raised to the dignity of a Diocese, suffragan to Verapoly. Rt. Rev. Ferdinand Ossi, O. C. D., (1883—1905) became the first Bishop. By a new Concordat between the Holy See and Portugal (1887), the See of Cochin was re-established, with portions taken from Verapoly and Quilon forming its territory. Thus a few villages along the Coast of Vilavancode taluq passed to Cochin (and now belong to the Diocese of Trivandrum). But the attachment of the old Catholics to Padroado was still strong, so that on hearing of the erection of the Diocese of Cochin, there was demand on the part of some Catholics of the Quilon Diocese that they should be reverted to it.[61] The Diocese did not escape the difficulties of Double Jurisdiction that were harassing the Church all over India.

Before passing on to the present Century, it may of interest to say a word about the movement of the so—called Independent Catholics. Under the leadership of a certain

60 Madras Catholic Directory and General Annual Register for the year 1871, Madras, Examiner Press, 1870.

61 See printed Memorandum to this effect dated 21—11—1887, in the Archives of Quilon.



H. E. THE MOST REV. DR. ALOYSIUS MARIA BENZIGER O. C. D.

Fr. Julian Alvarez, who had his headquarters in Ceylon, it seems to have been an attempt to perpetuate the Padroado in places no longer under its control. At the invitation of some dissatisfied elements along the Coast, he sent Fr. Soarez, who passed into South Travancore in 1895, and seems to have established himself at Nagercoil. It is certain he had a following at Cape Comorin and Rajakamangalam. But through the influence of the Carmelite Fathers, he was finally ordered to close his Missions and quit the State. It is said that he died at Dindigul, in the district of Madurai.[62]

Bishop Benziger

The twentieth century opened auspiciously with the nomination, on July 17th, of Fr. Aloysius Maria Benziger O. C. D., as Coadjutor, with the right of succession, to Bishop Ossi. Fr. Benziger was then Secretary to H. E. Ladislaus Zaleski, Delegate Apostolic to the East Indies, who had his headquarters at Kandy, Ceylon. It was there that Mgr Zaleski consecrated the new Bishop on 18th November of the same year and sent him over to Quilon. Bishop Benziger was immediately made Vicar General, in which capacity he helped in the administration of the Diocese. At the death of Bishop Ossi, Bishop Benziger took possession of the Diocese on 14th September 1905.

The phenomenal progress of the Diocese under his able rule has been recorded in the Souvenir of his Episcopal Silver Jubilee.[63] Referring the interested reader to that volume for a fuller account, it will serve our purpose here to have noted the following:—

His first endeavour was not only to relieve the Diocese of its heavy debts, but to assure for it a sound financial guarantee, to meet the many plans for its progress that he had already envisaged. He undertook therefore three different tours to Europe, with successful results. Thus he was enabled to open a Minor Seminary to foster vocations to the Priesthood, as early as 1902. In 1912 he revived the Major Seminary that had ceased to function after a short and chequered existence. Having thus made sure, for the Diocese, of a steady flow of well-trained priests, Bishop Benziger divided the Diocese into convenient Districts, greatly enhancing efficient administration. Thus the great District of the South gave place to three Vicar Foranates.

Greater insistence on Missionary activities also became possible. He financially backed up every hopeful center of conversions, providing it with chapels, schools, and when stabilised, churches. The South greatly expanded under his fostering care, and more than a dozen new parishes were established there during his regime. The Catholic population grew apace, with a steady influx of new-christians to augment it greatly, year by year.

He took great care to foster education among his people, according to the standards of his time. Every parish had its primary school. He placed a few of them under religious Congregations. To prepare Catholic teachers for these schools, he opened St. Francis Institute at Nagercoil in 1907. More than a hundred young men, hailing from almost all the parishes of the South, have passed out of this Institute as teachers and catechists. Feeling the need of a similar English training, he opened the Carmel English Middle School at Ramanputhur, Nagercoil, in 1922.

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62 T. K. Velu Pillai: The Travancore State Manual: 1940: Vol. II, p. 766; Agur: Church History of Travancore: p. 408.

63 A Quarter Century of Progress in the Diocese of Quilon: compiled by Rev. Fr. J. Vincent Fernandez, B. A., Trichinopoly, 1925.

He had, it may be affirmed without hesitation, a special regard for the southern parts of his Diocese. Besides the thorough and beneficial Pastoral Visitations to every parish once in five years, he took upon himself to solemnize personally the annual feast of St. Francis Xavier at Kottar with Pontifical Mass and Vespers. Considering the great distance from Quilon and the wretched conditions of transport, this sacrifice on his part testified not only to his devotion to the Apostle of India, but also to his love for the people of the South.

It is said that he used to express his wish to have a co-Cathedral in the South, and to reside there for a considerable length of time every year. But though he could not achieve this, he did even better, by establishing a separate Diocese, with its own Bishop and Cathedral. If in 1930 the Holy See found the South in a condition to be raised to the dignity of a Diocese, it was, to a large measure, due to the apostolic zeal and fostering care of this great and saintly Bishop, whose memory is, to this day, held in benediction by the priests and people of Kottar.

The progress that this territory made while under Quilon may be easily seen from the consolidated list of parishes and populations for some years given below:-[64]

Parish	Population				
	1847	1871	1906	1912	1930
1. Cape Comorin	2536	4000	4800	3342	4365
2. Puthenthuray	2484	3300	3400	3405	3300
3. Pillatope	2458	3200	3900	4262	1272
4. Colachel	2566	6600	4900	5086	5046
5. Kurumbanay (from 4: 1905)	1384	—	3000	3774	3536
6. Thengapattanam	1698	—	—	—	—
7. Kottar	6915	6890	12800	8005	5380
8. Karangadu	7873	6500	5400	6523	5393
9. Vengode	2780	4000	5800	3426	—
10. Enayam (6 transferred)	—	3000	2600	2784	4082
11. Mulagumudu (from 8)	—	7000	5000	7800	7239
12. Matravilai (from 11)	—	—	2700	3370	4090
13. Manguli (from 8)	—	—	3000	3968	4529
14. Thoduvetti (from 9)	—	—	6000	—	—
15. Kallikkavilai (14 transferred)	—	—	—	3240	—
16. Manakudy (from 1)	—	—	—	1965	2600
17. Mullanginavilai (from 11)	—	—	—	3750	5161
18. Ramanadichemputhur (from 7)	—	—	—	1478	—
19. Puthenkadai (from 17)	—	—	—	1905	7303
20. Madathattuvilai (from 8)	—	—	—	—	4001
21. Manalikarai (from 11)	—	—	—	—	3442
22. Kadiapattanam (from 3)	—	—	—	—	2486
23. Rajakamangalam (from 2)	—	—	—	—	1452
24. Thirithuapuram (from 15)	—	—	—	—	3701
25. Muttom (from 3)	—	—	—	—	2173
26. Vaniakudy (from 4 and 5)	—	—	—	—	3413
27. Asaripallam (from 7)	—	—	—	—	2926
28. Vavarai (15 transferred)	—	—	—	—	2950
29. Puthukadai (9 transferred)	—	—	—	—	4876
30. Rajavoor (18 transferred)	—	—	—	—	2200
Total No. of Parishes	9	9	13	17	25
Total Population	30294	44490	63300	68083	96916

64 Details taken from: Catalogue of churches, parishes and populations of the Diocese of Cochin from Cape to Krishnapuram, for 1847; Madras Catholic Directory and General Annual, for 1871; Mss. of Bishop Benziger in Quilon Archives, for 1906; Catholic Directory for India, for 1912; and Annual Returns in the Archives of Kottar, for 1930.

Priests and Seminarians of Kottar at the Consecration of Bishop Lawrence Pereira

It may be of interest to add a list of the parishes with their sub-stations and the priests in charge at the time of the erection of the new Diocese; the South was then divided into three Districts:-

First Division: Thirituapuram. Vicar Forane: Very Rev. Fr. Ignatius O. C. D.

1.	Thirituapuram: with Kuzhithurai, Pakkiapuram, Arumanai and Ambalakadai	: Fr. Ignatius O. C. D.
2.	Vavarai: with Kallikkavilai, Kulivilai and Parasalai (now in D. of Trivandrum)	: Fr. P. L. Christian
3.	Mullanginavilai: with Palliadi, Palayakadai, Eraviputhurkadai, Karingal, Kallithattu and Thundathuvilai	: Fr. Peter Thomas O. C. D.
4.	Puthenkadai: with Thoduvetti, Attur, Thickurichi, Unnamalaikadai, Kesavapuram, Thettiode, Kuruvikad, Kulasekaram, Thiruvanthikarai	: Fr. Stanislaus O. C. D. and Fr. Lawrence Fernandez
5.	Puthukadai: with Minchirai, Amasy, Pullani, Pullanguli, Puttetty, and Vilathurai	: Fr. Varghese Fernandez

Second Division: Kottar: Vicar Forane: Very Rev. Fr. Paul O. C. D.

1.	Cape Comorin; with Covalam	: Fr. Richard Rozario, and Fr. Victor Rodriguez
2.	Karangad: with Nullivilai, Aloor, and Sarel	: Fr. Ignatius Maria
3.	Rajavoor: with Ramapuram, Ramanadichemputhur, Marungoor and Aramboly-Kurusady	: Fr. Pious Morris
4.	Kottar: with Kurusady, Vadasery, Sitapal, Thittivilai, Ettamadai, Aramboly and Kalkad	: Fr. Paul O. C. D. and Fr. Mary Ephraem Gomez
5.	Madathattuvilai: with Villukeery, Padmanabhapuram, Puliyoorkurichi	: Fr. Pathrose Fernandez
6.	Manakudy: with Kil-Manakudy and Thamarakulam	: Fr. Raphael Jesudasan
7.	Manguli: with Eraniel, Murasancode, Konangad, Thirunainarkurichi, Thalakulam	: Fr. Dominic Nicholaus
8.	Mel-Asaripallam: with Kil-Asaripallam and Peruvilai	: Fr. Antony D'Cruz
9.	Mulagumudu: with Thiruvithancode, Kalkurichi	: Fr. Valerian Fernandez and Fr. Stanislaus Maria
10.	Manalikarai: with Manakkavilai and Meikkamandapam	: Fr. Tobias Fernandez
11.	Matravilai: Thikkanacode	: Fr. S. T. Mathias

Third Division: Colachel: Vicar Forane: Very Rev. Fr. John Pereira.

1.	Colachel: with Kottilpad and Puthur	: Fr. Vincent Fernandez
2.	Kurumbanai: with Alenji and Kil-Midalam	: Fr. Lucas Fernandez
3.	Enayam: with Mel-Midalam, Puthenthuray, Ramanthuray and Thengapattanam	: Fr. Henry Pereira and Fr. Ambrose Baldans
4.	Kadiapattanam	: Fr. Paul Stephen
5.	Muttam	: Fr. Ambrose Fernandez
6.	Pillatope	: Fr. John Pereira
7.	Puthanthuray: with Pallam	: Fr. John Fernandez
8.	Vaniakudy: with Kodimunay	: Fr. Stanislaus Kostka
9.	Rajakamangalam: with Pericad:	: Fr. Vincent J. Fernandez, Jr.

There were also the two educational Institutions at Nagercoil:-

1.	St. Francis' Institute	: Fr. Boniface Rebeira
2.	The Carmel English Middle School:	: Fr. Thomas Pereira

Thus there were 25 parishes and 31 priests for a total population of about 97000 Catholics.

PART II

THE GROWTH OF THE DIOCESE

(1930 — 1955)

1. CREATION OF THE DIOCESE

His Holiness Pius XI by his Apostolic Letter "Ad pastorale ministerium" of 26th May 1930, ordered the dismemberment of the Diocese of Quilon, erecting its southern and Tamil-speaking part into the new Diocese of Kottar, and entrusting it to the indigenous Diocesan Clergy. By another Letter of the same date, "Commissum humilitati Nostrae," Rev. Fr. Lawrence Pereira of the Diocese of Quilon was nominated to be the first Bishop. H. E. the Most Rev. Edward Mooney, Delegate Apostolic to India, Burmah and Ceylon, and (now Cardinal Archbishop of Detroit, U. S. A.) by his Decree of 15th July, put into execution the Papal Letters.

When in a letter dated 16th August, Bishop Benziger officially announced the double news, it was hailed with great joy and enthusiasm by priests and faithful, not only of the new Diocese, but of all Quilon. A committee was set up at Kottar under the chairmanship of Very Rev. Fr. Paul O. C. D., parish priest of St. Xavier's, which was to be raised to be the Cathedral. There was wholehearted cooperation, and parishes contributed generously to the Consecration Fund.

The first Circular Letter of the new Bishop, dated 9th September, announced the day of his taking canonical possession of the Diocese as well the date of his Consecration. The Letter of Erection of the Diocese was accordingly published in all the parochial churches during Holy Mass on 28th September. Mgr. Lawrence Pereira took possession of the Diocese the same day at 5 p. m. in a ceremony at the Cathedral. That day therefore may be considered the date of birth of the new Diocese.

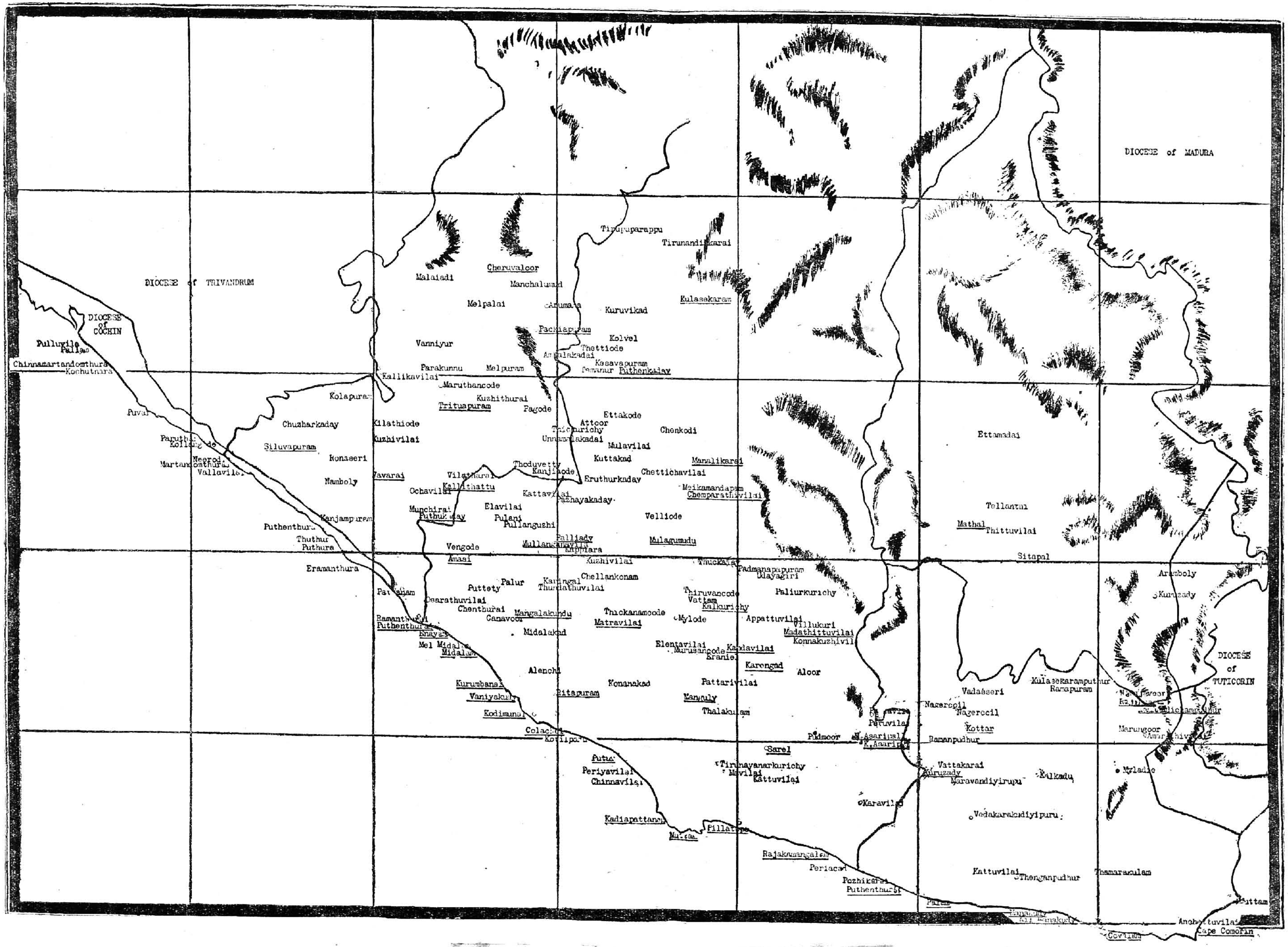
On 5th October, H. E. Mgr. Lawrence Pereira was consecrated bishop by His Grace the Most Rev. Dr. Angel Mary Perez Cecilia, O. C. D., Archbishop of Verapoly, the Co-Consecrators being H. E. Bishop Benziger, and H. E. Bishop James Kalachery of Changanachery. To accommodate the large gathering, the ceremony took place in a spacious, tastefully decorated pandal on the Cathedral grounds. Besides all the priests and Seminarians of the new Diocese, the ceremony was attended by a large concourse of the faithful from every parish of the Diocese. There were also present H. E. Bishop Alexander Chulaparambil of Kottayam, and the two prelates of Syro—Malankara Rite, His Grace Mar Ivanios, Archbishop of Bathany (later of Trivandrum) and H. E. Mar Theophilos, Bishop of Thiruvella. They had been received into union with Rome but a short time before from the Jacobite Schism, aided by the apostolic zeal of the new Bishop of Kottar, and this was their first appearance in a Catholic gathering of importance.

Kottar and the Cathedral

According to the Bull of Erection, Kottar was to be the episcopal town, and its church of St. Francis Xavier, the Cathedral.

Kottar is now part of the municipal town of Nagercoil. But this was a very recent development. Nagercoil was but an unknown hamlet when Ptolemy in the first century of the Christian era visited Kottar and described it as a "metropolis." It has figured largely in the political history of the South as may be seen from numerous inscriptions and documents, on stone and brass, to be found in the temples of the land.

It is said to derive its name from its location "at the bend of the river" Palayaru. The kingdom of Madurai on the east, the States of Travancore on the north, and the principality of Cape Comorin on the south converge on this strategetically located town, so that it changed hands with frequency. At the time of St. Francis Xavier, it seems to have been the capital of Venadu or Travancore.



DIOCESE OF KOTTAR

It has already been recounted in the first part how a chapel to Our Lady had been erected there by Xavier himself, and how after his death numerous miracles attracted large crowds to the "Saveriar Kurusadi" located in front of the church there. (vide supra p. 7 fol.) The church therefore came to be called after him, so that after his canonisation it was formally dedicated to him, perhaps after modification in the structure, if not complete renewal.

Kottar and its church acquired another glory in 1752 when the bones of the heroic martyr Devasahayam Pillai were interred within its sanctuary. (vide supra p. 16 fol.)

In 1865 the church was enlarged by transforming it into a cruciform building, with new wings and a sanctuary, and the whole was vaulted over, through the initiative of the Italian Fr. Emidius de SS. Angelis O. C. D., It was financed by the "offerings of the faithful" (vide: Missioni Estere dell 'Ordine de' Carmelitani Scalzi, 1871). The main altar was consecrated on 23rd August, 1874, by His Excellency the Rt. Rev. Ildephonse of St. John the Baptist O. C. D. titular Bishop of Amyzone and Vicar Apostolic of Quilon, enclosing therein the relics of the Holy Martyrs Placid, Celstin and Serenus. The chapel of Our Lady, standing on the spot where Xavier used to offer the Holy Sacrifice, was also then renovated and vaulted over. The antiquity of this tradition is evident from the fact that the floor of the chapel is more than two feet below the level of the surrounding ground. At the top of the reredos is found the figure of an angel holding a shield with a Tamil legend, meaning: Come and salute the place hallowed by his feet,—a manifest allusion to St. Francis Xavier and his residence there.

Due to successive extensions and alterations, the church has acquired many styles of architecture, including a completely Indian 'manadapam' in front. But the whole presents an imposing and pleasing appearance, and a look of bigness that is belied when one enters the church.

The beautiful statue that adorns the main altar is said to have been brought from Goa. There is also a Relic of the Saint which is exposed to the veneration of the faithful during the feast. That this Shrine of the Saint is as potent today as it was in days of old is attested to by the undiminishing number of pilgrims that throng to it annually. Truly the old proverb is still valid: Xavier of Kottar grants all prayers.

This was to be the Cathedral of the new diocese. Though small in size, it had such authentic claims to fame that it was indeed worthy of the honour.

To complete the record, it may be added that to commemorate the Fourth Centenary of the arrival of Xavier in India, a beautiful tower, with his statue on top, was erected in 1942, together with a Grotto of Our Lady of Lourdes and a Shrine to St. Ignatius—all on Cathedral grounds. As a memorial of the Silver Jubilee of the diocese it was decided to make further extensions to the wings and enlarge the sanctuary. The first stone of the extension was laid on 29th September 1955 after the Pontifical Mass of thanksgiving by H. E. Bishop T. R. Agniswami S. J.

2. THE ADMINISTRATION

Bishop Lawrence Pereira

The new Bishop was born at Kayankulam in Central Travancore on the first day of the year 1876. After the usual ecclesiastical studies in St. Teresa's Seminary at Quilon, he was raised to the Priesthood in 1905. More than seven years of his priestly life was spent in the south, first as Parish Priest of Vengode (including Puthukaday and Amasi) for two years, and then of Enayam (including Puthenthuray, Ramanthuray, Pattanam and Midalam). In 1915 he was transferred to Kattanam, at the

northern boundary of the diocese, where he bent all his energies to the conversion of Hindus and the return of Jacobites, with marked success. It was from this Mission-field that he was called upon by Providence to go south again, but now to shoulder the burdens of a first bishop of a new diocese.

By nature and grace he was well fitted for the colossal task before him. Tall in stature and well-proportioned, he had an imposing personality that was relieved of severity by the ever-ready smile lurking at the corners of his eyes and lips. His labours as pastor of souls for a quarter of a century had taught him prudence and patience that were eminently required in his new office. Above all he had an unbounded confidence in Divine Providence, as was shown by his motto: In Domino speravi, non confundar.

Bishop Benziger had done all in his power to launch the new diocese as smoothly as possible. But with the ship and the crew so very new, and with very, very limited resources of men and money at his command, every thing depended upon the new Captain to steer the ship with care and tact for the first few years, breasting heavy waves and avoiding hidden shoals and rocks. A balanced system of administration had to be created, sound traditions inaugurated, No doubt, the Diocese owes much to this good Bishop for the measure of stability in its foundations, and of steady growth in all departments, that have characterised it in the past twenty five years.

Bishop Lawrence ruled the Diocese but for a short period of a little over seven years. But in this short span he had achieved greatly, as shall be seen as we proceed. The last months of his life were burdened with illness, perhaps augmented by cares and worries. For his was a sensitive soul that felt keenly the troubles of his people. He breathed his last on 5th January 1938, a few days after completing his sixty second year of life.

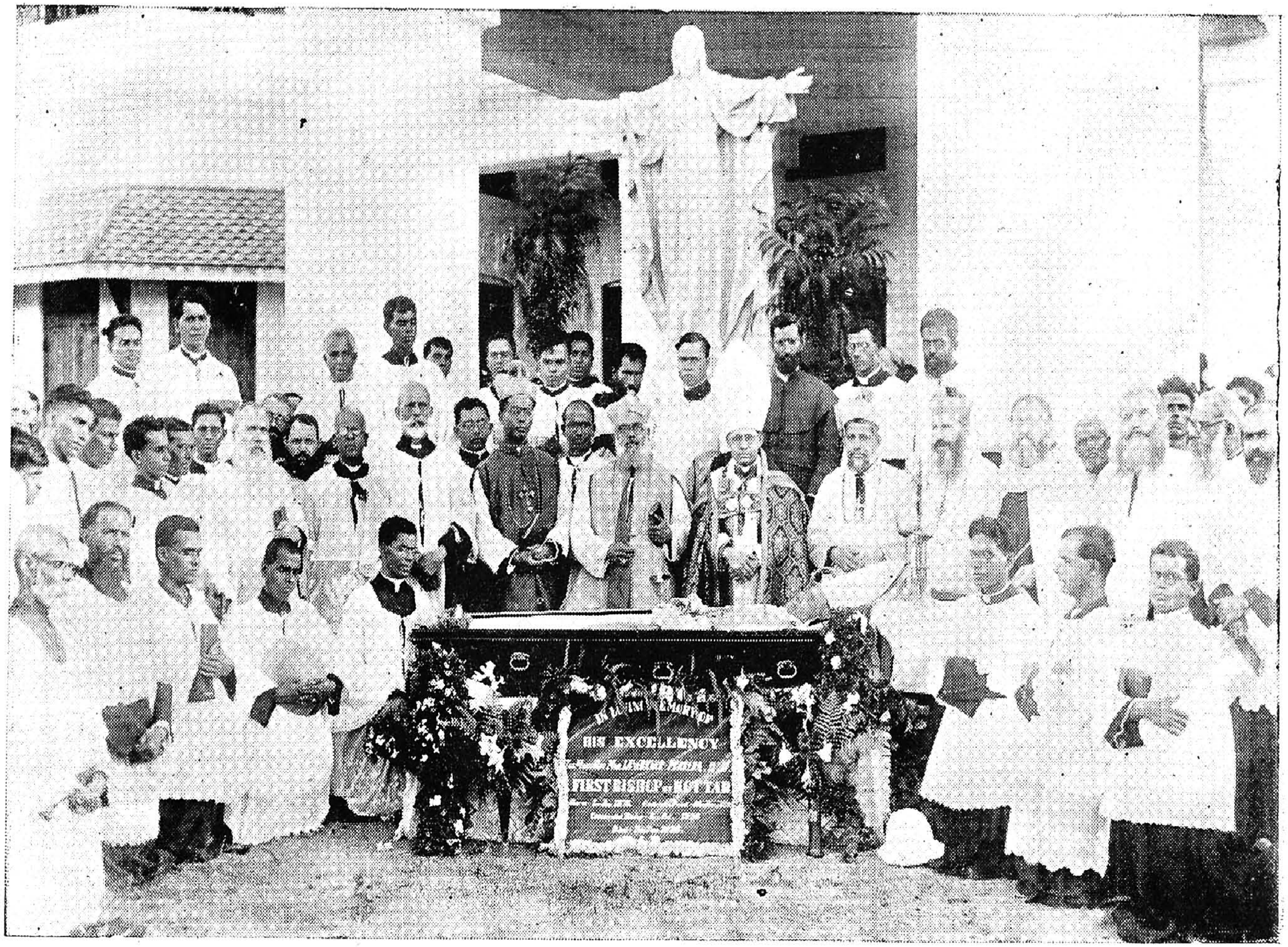
The news of his early demise came as a shock to his people. Great crowds began to converge on the Bishop's House from every parish, men and women, young and old, gathering in their thousands to pay their last respects to one whom they had come to love in such a short time. The funeral cortege from the House to the Cathedral astounded the town of Nagercoil. It had never seen the like before. His Grace Dr. Joseph Attipetty, Archbishop of Verapoly, presided over the obsequies, assisted by Bishop F. T. Roche S. J., of Tuticorin, who preached the funeral oration, Bishop V. Fernandez of Mangalore, Bishop V. Dereere O. C. D. of Trivandrum and Bishop Jerome Fernandez of Quilon. The remains of the beloved Bishop were laid to rest at the foot of the Main Altar of the Cathedral, on 6th January, at sun down. May his great soul rest in the peace of the Lord.

The widowed diocese was then administered by Rt. Rev. Vincent Fernandez, Sr., who had been formally elected Vicar Capitular by the Council of Diocesan Consultors. From March 1935 he had been the Vicar General to the late Bishop, so that he was able to carry on the administration without a break.

Bishop Roque Agniswami S. J.

On 5th January 1939, exactly a year after the demise of Bishop Lawrence, His Holiness Pope Pius XI nominated Very Rev. Fr. T. Roque Agniswami S. J. of the Vice—Province of Madurai, as the second Bishop of Kottar. The Bishop—elect was born of a respectable family of Thiruchirapalli on March, 26, 1891. After his secular studies in St. Joseph's College there, he entered the Society of Jesus, and was ordained priest on 25th November, 1923 at Kurseong, at the foot of the Himalayas. Appointed to the administration of parishes, his tact and prudence won for him the confidence of his superiors, so that he was steadily advanced to bigger and more responsible posts. Finally

H. E. THE MOST REV. DR. LAWRENCE PEREIRA



At the obsequies of Bishop Lawrence Pereira

he was made the Superior of the District of Palayamcottay—the first Indian Jesuit to reach this height.

For various reasons, like the unexpected demise of Pope Pius XI, it was as late as June when the Bishop—elect came over to Kottar to take possession of his See. He undertook at once an extensive tour of the Diocese, to acquaint himself with the parishes and their people.

Preparations were being made for his consecration at Kottar, when he was called to Rome by Pope Pius XII, there to be consecrated by the Supreme Pontiff himself with eleven other Bishops from the Missions. The consecration took place in St. Peter's Basilica, on 29th October, 1939, the feast of Christ the King. The new Bishop returned at the end of the year and was welcomed in a large gathering of priests and people at Kottar.

Bishop Agniswami soon endeared himself to all by his kindness and patience. Slow to praise, he is slower still to blame, viewing all with a breadth of charity that, in sooth, covereth a multitude of sins. The love and veneration in which he is held was given public manifestation when in November 1948 his Sacerdotal Silver Jubilee was enthusiastically celebrated.

These are the two Bishops under whom the Diocese progressed in the first twenty five years of its existence.

Center of Administration

Of the many handicaps with which Bishop Pereira had to cope, the lack of a suitable residence for himself and his Curia was the one to be felt at once. For a time accommodation was made in the parochial house attached to the Cathedral. With but ten small rooms, it is situated in a low-lying congested part of the town. It was indeed quite inadequate and inconvenient for administrative purposes. The need of a more suitable house became imperative. Thus, as soon as a new building was erected to house the High School in the Carmel Institute, at Ramanputhur (a suburb of Nagercoil), the Bishop considered it good policy to shift his headquarters thereto, arranging the upper floor for the purpose.

This set up could be neither permanent nor ideal. The school time-table clashed with Office work, and the constant stream of petitioners, and the frequent hearing of litigants, could not fit into a scholastic setting. Lastly, when all the classes in the High School would have been opened, the household would have to be crowded out. Thus it became necessary to build a separate house for the Bishop.

A site was selected on an elevated ground at Ramavarmapuram, another suburb of Nagercoil, but more than a mile away from its bustle and noise. H. E. Mgr. Leo Kierkels, Apostolic Delegate to India, blessed the corner stone on 26th May 1936. Designed by an expert to be the habitation of a Bishop and the administrative center of a Diocese, the building admirably serves its purpose. Standing on a large ground, with few houses near it, there is an atmosphere of seclusion and silence about it. Bishop Lawrence blessed the new building, and offered the first Mass in its domestic chapel, on Epiphany day, 1937. It is a curious coincidence that exactly a year later his mortal remains were borne out of it for burial!

At the entrance to the compound stands a small shrine of St. Anthony of Padua which draws many devotees, especially on Tuesdays. In the portico of the House itself there is a more than life size statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, stretching out the hands in a gesture of welcome. In the Court-room the Patron of the Diocese, St. Francis Xavier, presides, under the pencilled motto of the Curia: In Caritate et Justitia. The small

domestic chapel on the upper floor is dedicated to the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

The House stands on spacious grounds abounding in mango, laurel and cashew—nut trees. A pretty flower garden is laid round the House. It was the aim of Bishop Pereira to fill up the ground with various institutions. That aim is still kept in view. A part has already been occupied by the Minor Seminary. An Orphanage for boys, a Convent of Contemplative Nuns, a nursing home for priests—these are some of the other institutions which, it is hoped, will find in time their places there.

The House itself will ever be a monument to its builder, Bishop Lawrence Pereira.

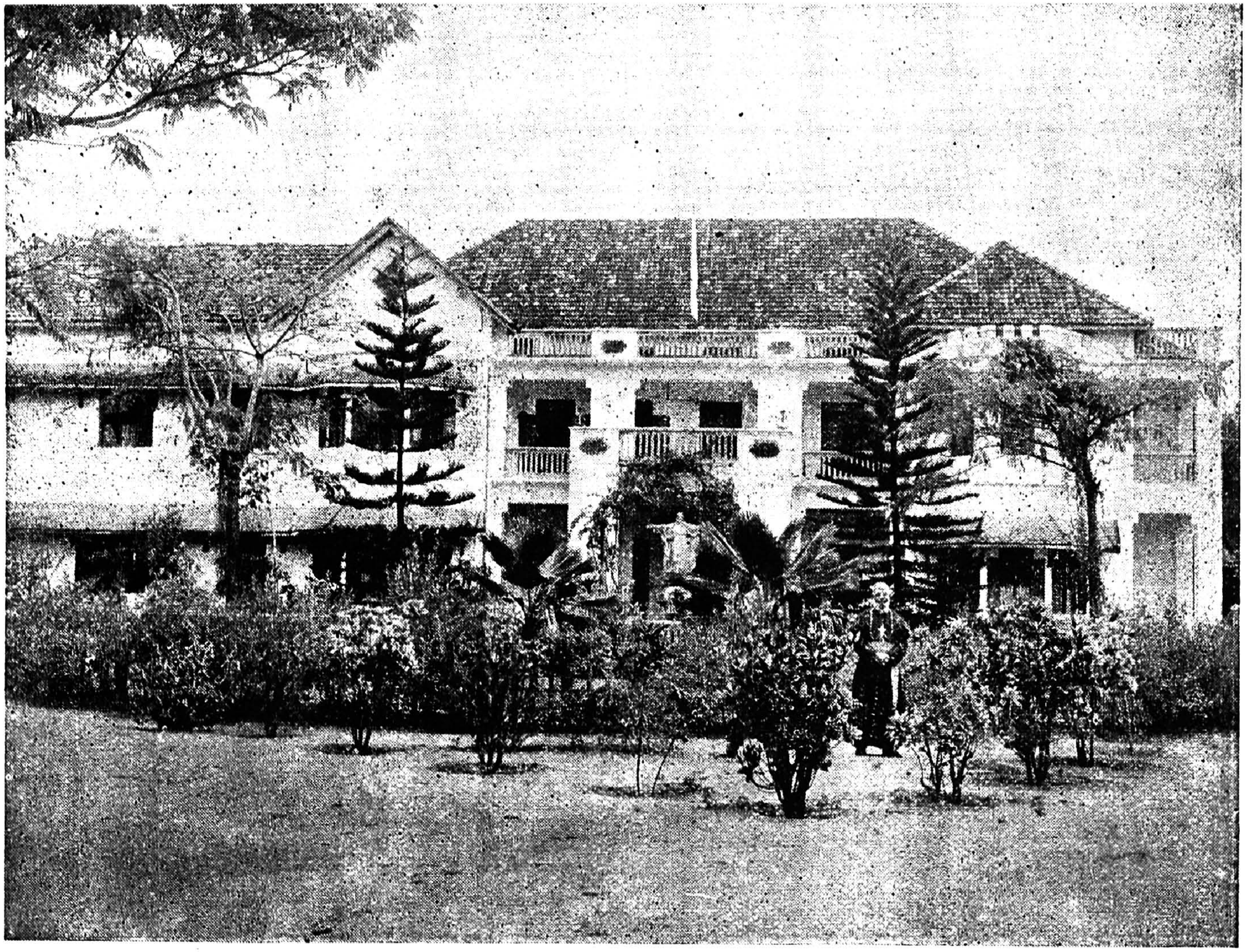
The Curia

Though suffering from an acute shortage of priests, the Bishop considered it necessary to establish his Curia to help in the administration of the Diocese. Very Rev. Paul O. C. D., the Belgian Missionary in charge of St. Xavier's, was asked to act as Vicar General at the formation of the Diocese. But in January of the following year (1931) he left for Quilon. He is now the Vicar General of the Diocese of Trivandrum.

On 20th January 1931, Rt. Rev. Fr. John Pereira, parish priest of Pillatope and Vicar Forane of Colachel District, became Vicar General. By birth and ordination to Priesthood, he was the senior-most priest of the Diocese. He had the additional work of the Procurator of the Diocese, and as long as the Bishop resided at Kottar, he was also the Rector of the Cathedral and parish priest of the vast territory attached to it. After about four years in office, he resigned his post, in October 1934, left the Diocese and reverted to Quilon. He had been one of the ablest priests in the South where he had spent the major part of his priestly life, in charge of Puthenthuray, Pillatope, etc. Continuing to be in active service in Quilon, and after its erection, in Trivandrum, he died on March, 12, 1942, as parish priest of St. Andrew's, Vettukad. R. I. P.

His successor in office was the Rt. Rev. Vincent Fernandez, Sr., Rector of the Cathedral and Vicar Forane of Kottar District. He took charge on 12th March, 1935. Fr. Vincent had spent all the long years of his priesthood in the South. An Assistant first at Mulagumudu, he was soon promoted to be the first parish priest of Matravilai. Then he had been in charge successively of the important coastal parishes of Kurumbanai, Puthenthurai, Cape Comorin and Colachel. As Vicar General, he served under both the Bishops, for a total of more than seven years. He also administered the Diocese for about 18 months as Vicar Capitular. When, feeling the weight of age, he resigned his responsible office, it was only to take up Mission—work in the small center at Amasy, where he has since succeeded in erecting two churches and a chapel, clearly testifying to his remarkable activity. On the occasion of the Sacerdotal Golden Jubilee, celebrated with eclat in March 1953, he was elevated to the dignity of a Domestic Prelate by the reigning Pontiff. Though he has already completed his eighty second year, he continues to be in active service.

On 17th April, 1944 Rt. Rev. Vincent Fernandez, Jr., B. A. and L. T., took office as Vicar General. Obtaining his B. A. degree after his ordination to Priesthood, he served for about four years as Prefect and Professor in St. Raphael's Minor Seminary, Quilon, when he was sent to the South as parish priest of Rajakamangalam. In March, 1931, he assumed charge of Carmel Middle School as Manager and Headmaster. Completing his L. T. course, he became the Headmaster of the High School when it was opened. In this capacity he made his mark as an outstanding educator and strict disciplinarian. He had been repeatedly called upon by the Authorities to help with his wise counsels



THE BISHOP'S HOUSE, NAGERCOIL

THE CURIA, 1955

in the running of the Diocese. He was a member of the Council of Administration as well as the Promotor of Justice and Defender of the Matrimonial bond, when he was appointed Vicar General. Always weak in health, he found it necessary to resign from office at the end of 1947. He has been living in retirement ever since.

The present incumbent of the office, Rt. Rev. J. M. Villavarayan, Ph. D., S. T. L., was appointed on 29th March 1948. A native of Cape Comorin, he has served, since his ordination in 1936, as parish priest successively of Madathattuvilai, Rajakamangalam and Kadiapattanam.

Very Rev. Fr. Valerian Fernandez was the first Chancellor of the Diocese. Due to lack of priests, the Chancellor acts also as the Notary and Private Secretary to the Bishop. When he was transferred to Colachel as Parish Priest and Vicar Forane, in 1933, Rev. Fr. Paul Sebastian Fernando assumed charge, and served the Diocese with distinction for many years. The present Chancellor, Rev. Fr. E. Francis, took charge in May 1944.

In the beginning, the Vicar General acted also as the Procurator of the Diocese. But in March 1935 Very Rev. Fr. Henry Pereira was appointed. The new Bishop's House was built under his supervision. He was replaced by Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Pereira in April 1947. Fr. Henry is still in active service, though an octogenarian, as parish priest of Kil-Asaripallam, where in 1954 he celebrated his Sacerdotal Golden Jubilee, and in 1955 opened a new Middle School.

Diocesan Consultors

According to the norms of Canon Law, in the absence of a Cathedral Chapter, a number of Fathers were constituted into a Council of Consultors as early as October 1930. Its members were:

Very Rev. Paul O. C. D., Pro-Vicar General,
" " John Pereira, V. F. and P. P., Pillatope,
" " Vincent Fernandez, P. P., Colachel,
" " Ambrose Fernandez, P. P., Muttam, and
" " Boniface Rebeira, Manager, St. Francis' Institute, Nagercoil.

The Very Rev. Consultors are appointed for a term of three years, with replacements or renewals at its end. The Fathers of the Council at present are:-

Rt. Rev. J. M. Villavarayan, Ph. D., S. T. L., Vicar General,
Very Rev. Ambrose Fernandez, V. F. and P. P., Colachel,
" " D. C. Anthony, P. P., Kurusady,
" " S. T. Mathias, V. F., and P. P., Mulagumudu, and
" " Stanislaus Maria, P. P., Mathravilai.

It is to be noted that Very Rev. Fr. Ambrose Fernandez has served continually for all the twentyfive years, which is perhaps a record. The Council meets more or less regularly four times a year, and as often as matters of importance require its Counsel.

The Diocesan Court

Due to lack of priests and other inconveniences the Court was not formed all at once, but evolved gradually. Normally the Vicar General acts as Official also. In January 1934, Very Rev. Vincent Fernandez Sr. was made the Official, with Very Rev. Vincent Fernandez Jr., as Vice-Official. It is also seen that Very Rev. Ambrose Fernandez has been, for particular cases or fixed periods of time, appointed as the Official.

The first Parish-Consultors were Very Rev. Henry Pereira and Stanislaus Kostka, both appointed in April 1934. In December of the same year the following were appointed Pro-Synodal Examiners and Judges:

Very Rev. Peter Thomas O. C. D., V. F. and P. P., Palliady,
" " Stanislaus O. C. D., V. F. and P. P., Kulasekharam,
" " Ambrose Fernandez, V. F. and P. P., Kottar, and
" " Valerian Fernandez, Chancellor.

The present set-up of the Diocesan Court is as follows:-

Vicar General and Official	:	Rt. Rev. J. M. Villavarayan, Ph. D., S. T. L.
Chancellor and Notary	:	Rev. Fr. E. Francis
Promoter of Justice and Defender of the Bond of Matrimony	:	Rev. Fr. Pious J. Morris
Pro-Synodal Judges	:	All the Very Rev. Members of the Diocesan Council
Pro-Synodal Examiners and Parish Consultors	:	Rev. Fr. Varghese Fernandez, Rev. Fr. Paul Sebastian Fernando, Very Rev. Fr. S. Barnabas and Rev. Fr. Josaphat Maria.
Council of Administration	:	Rt. Rev. J. M. Villavarayan, Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Pereira, and Very Rev. Fr. S. Barnabas
Council of Vigilance	:	Rt. Rev. J. M. Villavarayan, Very Rev. Fr. Ambrose Fernandez & Very Rev. Fr. Mary Ephræm Gomez.
Censores of Books	:	Rev. Fr. Paul Sebastian Fernando & Rev. Fr. Josaphat Maria.

Administrative Divisions

As we have indicated above (vide P. 27), when the Diocese was erected there were three Divisions presided over by three Vicars Forane. On December 10th 1930, the Diocese was redivided into four Districts, as follows:-

1. District of Kottar : including the parishes of Kottar, Cape Comorin, Manakudy, Puthenthurai, Rajakamangalam, Asaripallam and Rajavoor : 7 parishes.
2. District of Colachel : with Colachel, Pillatope, Muttam, Kadiapattanam, Vaniakudi, Kurumpanai and Enayam : 7 parishes.
3. District of Mulagumudu : with Mulagumudu, Mullanginavilai, Mathravilai, Manguly, Karangad, Madathattuvilai and Manalikarai : 7 parishes.
4. District of Thirituapuram : with Thirituapuram, Vavarai, Puthukadai and Puthenkadai : 4 parishes.

Later an additional District was established, at Palliadi, which was in course of time shifted to Puthukadai and finally suppressed, as it was found to be inconveniently overlapping. At present the state of the four Districts is as follows:-

1. District of Kottar : Vicar Forane : Very Rev. Fr. S. Barnabas.
Parishes : Kottar, Kurusadi, Cape Comorin, Covalam, Manakudi, Puthenthurai, Rajakamangalam, Saral, Mel-Asaripallam, Kil-Asaripallam, Christ King, Mathal, Rajavoor and Ramanadichemputhur : Total 15 parishes

2. District of Colachel : Vicar Forane : Very Rev. Fr. Ambrose Fernandez.
Parishes : Colachel, Pillatope, Muttam, Kadiapattanam, Puthur, Ritapuram, Kodimunai, Vaniakudi, Kurumbanai, Mangalakunru, Midalam, Enayam and Puthenthurai: Total : 13 parishes

3. District of Mulagumudu : Vicar Forane : Very Rev. Fr. S. T. Mathias.
Parishes : Mulagumudu, Madathattuvilai, Karangad, Kandanvilai, Manguli, Mathravilai, Mullanginavilai, Palliadi, Manalikarai, Chemparuthivilai and Kalkurichi Total : 11 parishes

4. District of Thirituapuram : Vicar Forane : Very Rev. Fr. Mary Ephræm Gomez.
Parishes : Thirituapuram, Vavarai, Siluvaipuram, Parakunru, Pakiapuram, Kulasekaram, Puthenkadai, Kallithattu, Puthukadai, Amasi and Vengode Total : 11 parishes

The Vicars Forane are expected, according to the laws of the Church, to help in effective supervision of the Diocese. To facilitate this, they have been provided with Questionnaires, which they are to fill in at their annual visits to the parishes of their Districts, and submit the answers to the Ordinary before the Annual Clergy Retreat. They are also called upon to visit the parishes in times of dispute to compose differences on the spot.

3. POPULATION AND PARISHES

From the two lists of the Administrative Districts given above, it will be amply evident how the number of parishes has increased. It has in fact exactly doubled in the past twenty five years, at the average of one new parish per annum. From the very beginning there was need to set up new parishes to facilitate their administration as well as to satisfy more easily the spiritual needs of the growing population. Karangad, to cite one example, yielded up part of its territory in 1939 to be formed into the parish of Sarel, and again another part in 1944 that has become the present parish of Kandanvilai. Many more divisions could have been effected. They were indeed necessary. But more could not be attempted for want of priests. As they are, in comparison with other Missionary-Dioceses of India, it may be said that the parishes here are compact in area, with no far-flung villages that may not be conveniently visited every week. Distances are not great and roads are plentiful. But it is the great number of souls in each parish that makes divisions imperative. As new workers come into the field from the Seminaries, more parishes are planned to be established, and that at no distant future.

Here is a list of new parishes erected in the last quarter of a century, with the names of the parish from which they were separated, and the dates of erection:-

Parishes erected since 1930

	New Parish	Mother-church	Date	
1.	Cheruvallur (now Parakunru)	Manavilai (in Quilon Diocese)	October	1930
2.	Kulasekaram	Puthenkadai	May	1931
3.	Kallithattu	Puthukadai	June	1931
4.	Christ the King, Nagercoil	Asaripallam	October	1931
5.	Palliadi	Mullanginavilai	November	1931
6.	Midalam	Enayam & Kurumbanai	October	1932
7.	Puthur	Colachel	February	1933
8.	Mathal	Kottar	October	1934
9.	Kil-Asaripallam	Asaripallam	September	1935
10.	Siluvaipuram	Vavarai	March	1936
11.	Packiapuram	Thirituapuram	August	1936
12.	Kurusadi*	Kottar	December	1936
13.	Enayam-Puthenthuray*	Enayam	December	1936
14.	Covalam*	Cape-Comorin	December	1936
15.	Mangalakunru	Puthukadai	October	1939
16.	Sarel*	Karangad	July	1939
17.	Pallam*	Puthenthurai	July	1939
18.	Chemparuthivilai	Manalikarai	July	1943
19.	Amasi	Puthukadai	April	1944
20.	Kandanvilai	Karangad	April	1944
21.	Ramanadichemputhur	Rajavoor	May	1946
22.	Ritapuram	Mathravilai	June	1948
23.	Vengode	Puthukadai	November	1949
24.	Kodimunai	Vaniakudi	February	1954
25.	Kalkurichi	Mulagumudu	February	1954

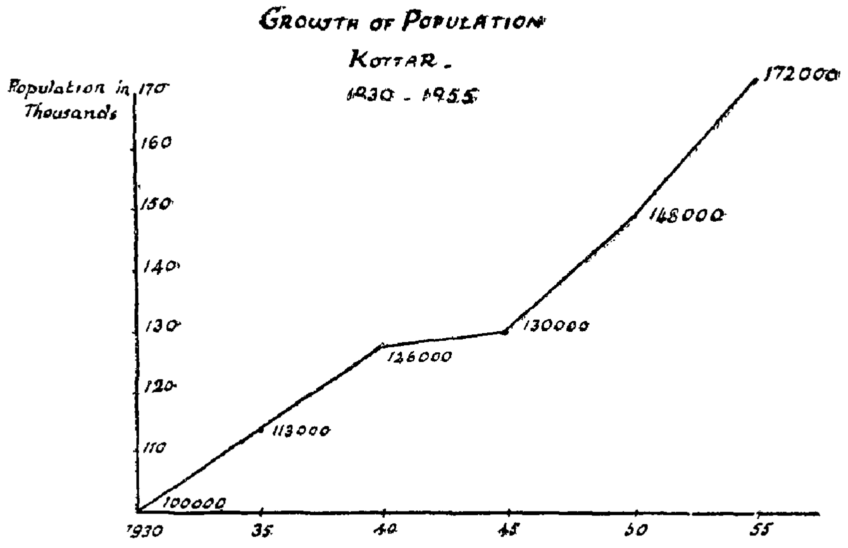
(Parishes marked with the asterics * though then divided were given separate parish priests only much later)

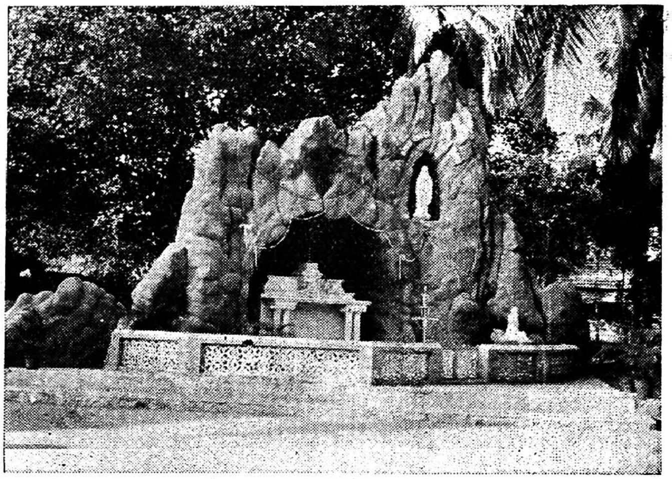
Population

The Catholic population of the Diocese has been growing steadily from year to year. Starting with 100,000, in round numbers, it has in twenty five years reached the grand total of 170,000, making Kottar one of the most populous dioceses of India. Both in relation to the area and to the non-Catholic population, the Diocese is well placed. The growth has been due not only to births from Catholic parents, but also to a consistent flow of converts from Hinduism and Protestantism.

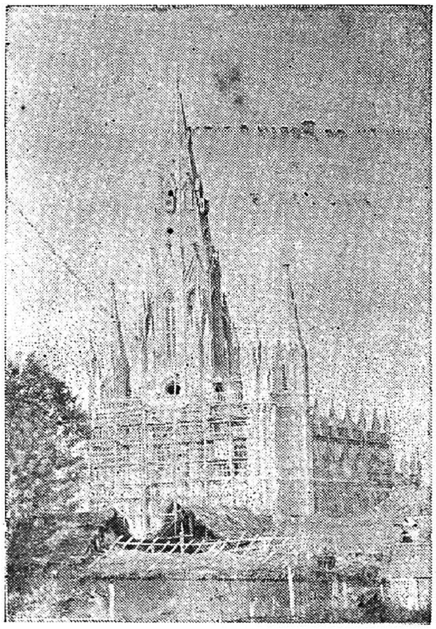
The statistics given below may not be minutely correct for each year. But they attest to the general trend, which is steeply upward, especially in the later years. The levelling off in the years between 1940 and 1945 may perhaps he ascribed to the effects of the Second World War, with its aftermath of famine and epidemics, coupled with financial stress on the Diocese, chiefly due to the lowering of aid from abroad.

In the field of conversions, without going into numerical details, it may perhaps be claimed that, both with regard to the steadiness of missionary endeavour, and to the actual number of converts received per year, Kottar yields to no other Diocese in India. The efforts of our missionaries have

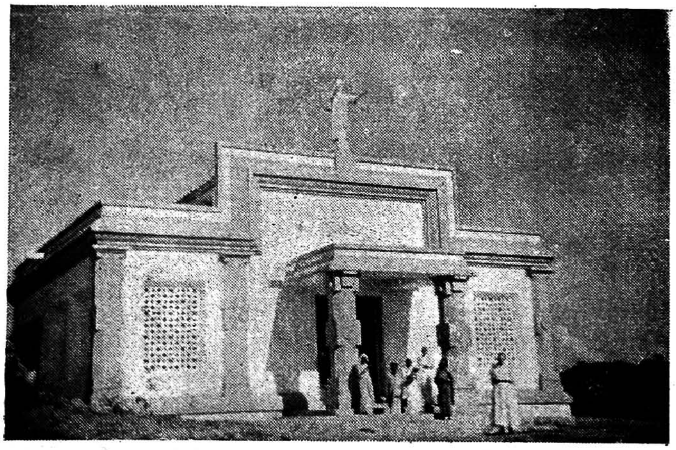

GROWTH OF POPULATION
KOTTAR.
1930 - 1955
Population in Thousands
170
160
150
140
130
120
110
100000
113000
126000
130000
148000
172000
1930
35
40
45
50
55



GROTTO OF OUR LADY OF LOURDES, PALLIADY



CHURCH OF OUR LADY
Cape Comorin



THE CHURCH OF THE S. HEART, PARAKUNRU
built in the Dravidian style

been most fruitful in the northern taluqs of Kalkulam and Vilavankode.

Since a dozen years and more, formidable obstacles have been placed in the way of evangelisation, such as: the famous Temple-entry Proclamation of His Highness the Maharajah of Travancore, by which all the Hindu temples in the State were thrown open to all castes, in an attempt to retain the 'lower' castes in its fold; the establishment of a 'Hindu Mission' with centralised funds and power, and well-paid catechists and organisers who have been active in creating opposition and difficulties for the Missionaries; the denial to Christians of scholarships and other financial helps from the Government granted to others of the same caste or financial status; covert, but still palpable disfavour shown to Christian propaganda; Government inquiries when conversions are reported; and the practically full stoppage of Missionaries from abroad.

In spite of all this, the grace of God has triumphed signally in bringing many families and villages into the fold of Christ.

A note-worthy development in recent years is the work of Lay Apostles in spreading the Kingdom of God. Catholic Action groups, the Legion of Mary and the Sodalities, both of men and women, have rendered yeoman service in helping the priests to contact promising persons and to instruct the neophytes. in fostering the new-converts and making them feel at home with brotherly welcome and aid.

Another welcome feature in the later years has been strengthening of the Pontifical Society for the Propagation of the Faith, in the Diocese. Branches are established in every parish, and the annual collection on Mission Sunday attests to a growing awareness of the Missionary form of the Church, and of the personal obligation of every Catholic to aid it with his prayers and sacrifices. God is not outdone in generosity; the more we endeavour to help the Missions of the world, the more do our own flourish—a true realisation of the Tamil proverb: Feed the alien child, and your own will grow.

Churches and Chapels

Growth of the Catholic population calls for a proportionate increase in the number not only of priests, but also of churches and chapels. New centers of converts have to be provided with new places of worship. Existing ones have to be extended and enlarged to accommodate growing congregations. Old and weak structures have to be replaced. New convents and other institutions have to have their chapels. In all these ways has the number of churches and chapels in the Diocese grown from 119 in 1930 to 244 in 1955 - an average increase of 5 per year.

Nagercoil, in which is the Cathedral town of Kottar, may be taken as an example of this growth. In 1930 there were 5 parochial churches and 3 chapels in the area. Today there are as many as 12 churches and 10 chapels.

From a financial point of view, the building of churches falls under three categories. Some are erected by the unaided efforts of the parishioners, others are put up completely by the Diocese, and the third and largest group consists of churches built by the people helped in varying measure by the Diocese.

To the first group belong all the churches along the coast. They have been mostly replacements, as in Kil-Manakudi and Kodimunai, where the old inadequate buildings have been pulled down to give place to larger and more modern structures. Others have been extended, as in Periacad, Mel-Manakudi, etc. There are a few churches under construction, large in extent and grand in architectural conception, as in E. Puthenthurai, Vaniakudi, Kesavan Puthenthurai and Rajakamangalam. The Gothic building at Cape

Comorin is, after about twenty years of inactivity, now hastening to its completion. Its central tower, soaring into the skies to a height of 150 feet, was crowned with a gold Cross, blessed by H. E. Bishop Agniswami, on 20th November 1955. All in all, it bids fair to be one of the beautiful churches of South India.

Most of the churches in the many Mission centers are built entirely from Diocesan funds, augmented by the generous offerings of benefactors in America and Europe. Due to great demands on the Diocese, it is to be expected that in building these churches economy and utility rather than elaborate architectural perfection would be the prime factor. In fact most of them suffer from a sameness in design and appearance. An outstanding exception to this is the beautiful church, partly completed, of the Sacred Heart at Parakunru. Conceived entirely in the Dravidian style, it holds the admiration of the visitor by its novel design and architectural unity. Another church, also in the Dravidian style, is ready to be blessed at Kanjiracode. The burden of renovation and extension of existing churches in the Missions falls also on Diocesan funds. In recent years the churches at Manalikarai and Siluvaipuram, to give two examples, had to be thoroughly renovated.

Churches among the older Catholics of the interior are helped by the Center in varying measures according to various considerations, both for their building and extensions. Here again, for reasons of economy, it would be difficult to find many examples of architectural beauty. Mention may be made of the Church of Our Lady of Snows at Maravankudiyiruppu, finely conceived and executed, but awaiting completion for want of funds. The churches at Sarel and Ritapuram may be cited as other examples where an effort has been made to add beauty to utility.

It is to be remarked that we have discussed above only churches that have been built, extended or completed after 1930. It is also to be noted that replacements are not included in the number 125 given above as the total increase. It gives only new places of worship where there were none before.

4. PRIESTS AND RELIGIOUS

In common with most of the Dioceses of India, Kottar has been, and is, suffering from an insufficiency of priests. Excluding the Monks in the Carmelite Monastery at Thuckalai, there were but 28 Diocesan priests and 3 Carmelite Missionaries at the time of the erection of the Diocese. They had to meet the demands of about 100,000 souls in 25 parishes, not to mention the mission-fields ripe for the harvest. Few of these Diocesan priests were from the new territory, most hailing from other parts of the mother Diocese of Quilon. In the course of years, as many as seven of the latter, and two of the Carmelites, left the Diocese for Quilon, for various reasons. The Diocese has lost also, in twenty five years, eight of its priests, including the last Carmelite and its first Bishop, through death. These were grievous losses to the infant Diocese. What made matters worse was the penury of vocations. So much so that the Bishops have had to admit students from outside to be ordained for Kottar, incardinate priests from other Dioceses, and to borrow some for temporary service from neighbouring Bishops.

Thus in 1950 the Diocese was happy to get two priests from the Societas Auxiliatrix Missionum that has its headquarters at Louvain, Belgium. Founded by the veteran Missionary in China, Rev. Fr. Vincent Lebbe in 1925, its specific aim is to train European Missionaries to serve exclusively under Native Bishops in the Missions. They are not Religious, but are incardinated into the Diocese in which they serve. Conditions have been made as favourable to the Bishops as possible,

Bishop Lawrence Pereira and Priests of the diocese after the first Retreat preached by H. E. Francis Tiburtius Roche S. J. Bishop of Tuticorin 1931.

THE CLERGY IN 1940

so that in case of necessity a Bishop could send back a member and the Society would be obliged to receive him back. Two young clerics of this Society were assigned to Kottar, who thenceforward looked upon it as their own, and prepared themselves by learning English and Tamil for their future work. After their ordination they came over to India where they spent about a year in acquainting themselves with the language, climate, customs and food of the people. Today they are in charge of two parishes.

In the following year the Latin Congregation of the Third Order of Carmel of Manjumel (in the Archdiocese of Verapoly) was approached to open a House in the Diocese. They have since established a House at Manalikarai. The Superior is the parish priest of the district, while the parishes of Chemparuthivilai and Puthukadai are also manned by them, temporarily.

There are thus 67 priests in the Diocese today, including four of these Missionary Carmelites of Manalikarai, and two other priests in retirement. But the need is still so great that elderly priests, including octogenarians, are assigned to parish work.

Vocations to the Priesthood

It is indeed a sad state of affairs. 2700 Catholics per priest is far below the world ratio of 1270 to one in 1955, while there is alarm in Italy at the fact that there is only one priest to 800 Catholics there! Every effort must be made to remedy this. It was felt that the only sure way to this was to foster vocations in the Diocese itself.

At the erection of the Diocese there were 13 students belonging to it in Major Seminaries, and but 2 in the Minor. Year by year applications remained very low, so that there was little possibility of a real selection. No wonder many did not persevere. The list of admissions and dismissals is a dreary reading. From 1930 to 1947 only 48 entered the Minor Seminary, an average of less than 3 per annum. Of these as many as 32 are seen to have quit! It is true that a few were admitted directly to Major Seminaries. But most of these were from other Dioceses.

Such a state could not be allowed to continue without gravely injuring the prospects of the growing Diocese. It was decided in 1948 to make an all-out effort. Wide publicity was given about vocations in Thenoli, the Diocesan Monthly. In a special Circular Letter of the Bishop a Priests' Day was announced for the first Sunday in May when sermons were to be preached in all the churches encouraging the parents to raise the aspirations of their children to this noble calling. It was also to be a day of prayer to the Lord of the Harvest to send more labourers into His Vineyard. This was made into an annual feature.

The results so far have been gratifying. We have to thank God for the good number of boys who have shown themselves eager to embrace the clerical state. Of the two dozen or more that present themselves, the best are chosen. Thus in the seven years since 1948 as many as 83 have been admitted, an average of 12 per annum, of which but 31 have left. But there is still much to be desired, in the quality of the candidates especially. The Rev. Parish Priests have been asked to keep likely candidates under their observation, and in every way to foster vocation in their respective districts.

The Minor Seminary

Students from Kottar had continued to go to St. Raphael's Minor Seminary of Quilon where they attended St. Aloysius' High School for their secular studies. But when the vernaculars replaced English as the medium of instruction, our Tamil boys could no longer be sent to that Malayalam school. Other arrangements had to be made. The Little Flower Seminary of the Diocese of Tuticorin gave us accommodation for a few

years. A sort of super-boarding was arranged for some in the Carmel High School, Nagercoil. But all this proved unsatisfactory. The necessity for a Minor Seminary of our own became urgent.

When it was proposed to erect a memorial to the late Archbishop Benziger, it was decided in August 1945 that it should take the form of the much-needed Minor Seminary. Contributions were sought from the Clergy of the Diocese, from parishes, from friends and admirers of the great Archbishop in India, Ceylon and Malaya; and the Sacred Congregation of Propaganda Fide was approached for help.

The response to the appeals was encouraging, so that it was decided to lay the first stone on the auspicious occasion of the Sacerdotal Silver Jubilee of H. E. Bishop Agniswami. On 30th November 1948, accompanied by H. E. Bishop Roche of Tuticorin, and in the presence of a large gathering of priests and people of the Diocese, and other guests, the Bishop blessed and laid the foundations. The inscription on the corner stone reads thus:

DIVO ALOISIO PATRONO
IN MEMORIAM PRAECLARISSIMI
RR. DD. A. M. BENZIGER
DICATI
HUJUS SEMINARII INCOEPTIS
RR. DD. ROCHUS AGNISWAMI
ANNO JUBILARI SUI SACERDOTII
RITE BENEDIXIT
DIE XXX NOVEMBRIS A. D. MCMXLVIII

(which may be rendered: Under the patronage of St. Aloysius and dedicated to the memory of the illustrious Lord Bishop Benziger, the foundations of this Seminary were duly blessed by the Most Rev. Roque Agniswami, on 30th November, in the year of his Sacerdotal Jubilee, A. D. 1948).

The building was solemnly blessed on 31st May 1952. Standing on a large well-wooded ground, away from the noise and bustle of the town, St. Aloysius' Minor Seminary is conveniently built to accommodate about 35 boys. Candidates who have passed third form are eligible for admission. They attend Carmel High School, a few furlongs away, till they obtain the School-leaving Certificate. Then they are given two years of training in Latin and other preparatory subjects, to equip them for the study of Philosophy and Theology in Major Seminaries. Already 16 students have passed on from St. Aloysius' while there are now 27 on the rolls.

Due to lack of priests a full-time staff could not be assigned to the Seminary. Rev. Fr. E. Francis, the Chancellor and Notary of the Diocese, has been given the added duties of Rectorship. He is assisted by Rev. Fr. Maria Gregory, as Prefect, and Rev. Fr. D. Jesudasan. Only the Prefect lives with the students at the Seminary, the other two boarding at the Bishop's House which is quite near, and going over for their respective duties at fixed hours. The Tamil teacher of Carmel High School comes over twice a week to take lessons for the Seminarians. Rev. Fr. Emmanuel Pereira, the Procurator of the Diocese, is their Spiritual Father.

From Reports received so far from Major Seminaries, the infant institution has reason to be proud of its achievements so far. The Professors take great pains to raise the standard of Latin and English sufficiently up to requirements. Literary academies and dramatic entertainments help in the formation of the students. Spacious playing grounds and the salubrious location of the Seminary contribute their share to the health of the inmates. Sound training in Music, plain chant and polyphonic as well as Indian, is given to all. Boys with special aptitudes are taught to play the organ and the violin. The Seminary choir assists at all Pontifical functions at the Cathedral. All in all, the Seminary tries to live up to its lofty motto:

St. Aloysius' Minor Seminary, Nagercoil 1955

DONEC FORMETUR CHRISTUS (Unto the formation of Christ), which is blazoned boldly on the building.

Major Seminarians

The Diocese does not possess a Major Seminary. The policy of the Hierarchy of India is to have Regional rather than Diocesan Seminaries. But Quilon did have a Diocesan Seminary which trained most of our ecclesiastical students upto its suppression in 1947. Then St. Joseph's Apostolic Seminary, conducted by the Spanish Discalced Carmelite Fathers, was named as the only Regional Seminary for the whole of Malabar. In consideration of linguistic unity and cultural affinities, the Bishop of Kottar was given the option of sending some of his students to St. Paul's Seminary at Thiruchirapalli, under the management of the Jesuit Fathers of the Province of Mathurai.

Our students are distributed as follows in various Major Seminaries: St. Paul's, Thiruchirapalli, 27; St. Joseph's, Alwaye, 6; the Papal Seminary, Poona, 3; making a grand total of 36. Another, already a priest, is prosecuting his higher studies at Rome. By the grace of God there is every hope that the Diocese will receive a steady flow of priests in the years to come, so that the burden of the care of souls could be more evenly distributed, and priestly activities could expand in directions necessary but till now untouched.

Religious Congregations and Vocations

This may be the appropriate place to speak of the many Congregations of Religious men and women that are in the Diocese and to evaluate the growth of vocations therefrom. Religious Houses are power houses of grace, and prescinding from all other activities, their prayers and sacrifices are invaluable for the progress of any diocese. If in addition it gets their active cooperation in the work of evangelisation, it may be said to be twice blessed.

ORDER OF OUR LADY OF MOUNT CARMEL: Its contribution to the growth of Christianity in these parts is amply evident from what has been said in the first part of this brochure. The Discalced Carmelite Fathers of the Belgian Province opened St. Elias' Residence at Thuckalai as early as 1913. In 1931 this became the Monastery of the Queen of Peace and St. Joseph. The Novitiate was housed therein in 1947, when the Malabar Province was formed. Situated in the very heart of the town, it serves as a beacon of light to the great Catholic population around, attracting many by the splendour of its liturgical functions and the readiness of the Fathers to act as spiritual guides. Though forbidden by their Constitution to be in charge of parish work, they yet conduct classes of catechism for the children, and help in meeting the spiritual needs of the town. Their Young Men's Association is a flourishing unit of Catholic Action, and their annual demonstration in honour of Christ the King is well organised and attractive. The Fathers are also ready to give help, as far as possible, to the neighbouring parish priests. Though so long established in this territory, it seems that there was but one from this diocese who was a professed Carmelite in 1930. Today there are 10 Lay-brothers, one Choir-brother and one Novice. Considering the strictness observed in admissions by the Order, this is indeed considerable.

FRANCISCAN BROTHERS OF MT. POINSUR: This Congregation of Franciscan Tertiaries, founded in 1901 for the work of conversion in the Missions, with headquarters at Mt. Poinsur, Bombay, opened its first House in the Diocese in 1939, at Chemparuthivilai. The Brothers have shifted their House since to a few other centers, in consideration of convenience and the hope of conversions. Now they have two Houses, at Pagode and Kolvel. From these centers they visit neighbouring villages attracting converts, preparing them for baptism, instructing them and their children in the Faith. Their

labours have borne abundant fruit. It is regrettable that so far they have received no candidates from the Diocese.

CANONESSES OF ST. AUGUSTINE: Among the many Congregations of Religious Women in the Diocese, the pride of place goes, for more reasons than one, to these Canonesses. The Diocese can be proud of the fact that it was within its confines that this Congregation was founded and had its Motherhouse for many years. For it was at Mulagumudu that the Very Rev. Mother Marie-Louis de Meester began the Congregation in 1897. A member of the Canonesses of St. Augustine of Bruges, Belgium, she was inspired to found a Missionary branch in India. With a companion, Dame Marie Ursule, she came over without breaking off her religious profession through a special dispensation, and transferred her vow of obedience to the Bishop of Quilon. The beginnings of the Congregation were heart-breaking to the extreme. But with heroic fortitude every obstacle was overcome, and she was able in 1906 to open a Novitiate in Belgium itself, at Roulers. Other Convents were opened in the territory, in 1908 at Cape Comorin, in 1910 at Nagercoil, in 1915 at Asaripallam, in 1916 at Kulasekaram, in 1921 at Palliadi and in 1924 at Ritapuram, Colachel. The only Convent to be opened after the erection of the Diocese was at Valliavilai, in 1936.

From the beginning the Congregation admitted native girls as Lay-sisters, so that when the Diocese was erected there were as many as 31 of them from it. Today there are 54, excluding 11 who have already gone to their eternal reward. Their number would have been greater but for the fact that no new admissions are to be received into the Lay-sisterhood. There are besides two Novices from the Diocese at Palayamcottai.

Of the various activities of this Congregation more will be said later. It is enough to record here that there are 54 Canonesses and 51 Lay-sisters working in the Diocese, in various departments, that have all contributed to the extension of the kingdom of God.

CONGREGATION OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY: This indigenous Congregation of teaching Sisters was founded at Pondicherry by Very Rev. Fr. L. Dupuis, of the Foreign Mission of Paris, on October 16, 1844. Bishop Benziger acquired their services for his Diocese, and their first House in the south was opened in 1922 at Kadiapattanam. In 1927 another House was formed at Manakudi. After 1930 they have opened three more Convents: at Ramanputhur, Nagercoil, in 1942; at Puthenthurai in the same year; and at Sarel in 1953. There are 33 Sisters working in these Convents.

In 1930 there were five from the Diocese who were professed Sisters in this Congregation. Their number has increased to fifty today, of whom three are dead. There are besides 7 Novices and 7 Postulants, giving a total of 61—a remarkable growth indeed.

SISTERS OF THE HOLY CROSS: Founded also in 1844, in Menzingen, Switzerland, by Very Rev. Fr. Theodosius Florentini O. F. M. Cap., the Sisters were first employed as nurses in the Government District Hospital at Nagercoil in 1927, where they continued till 1952. They were also in charge of the Child Welfare Center and Health Visiting under the Nagercoil Municipality, a work which they are doing to this day. When the Tuberculosis Hospital opened in 1945 at Nagercoil their services were required there too. Thus they have two Houses now, with 8 Sisters unobtrusively sacrificing themselves for the health of body and soul of the sick.

Till recent times they have had no vocations from the Diocese. But now there are two professed Sisters and two postulants.

SISTERS OF ST. ANNE, THIRUCHIRAPALLI: Bishop Alexis Canos S. J. founded this Congregation in September 1877.

கோட்டாறு

புனித பிரான்சிஸ் சவேரியார் கோவில்

திருவிழா சிறப்பு

1976

நவம்பர் திங்கள் 24 ஆம் நாள் துவங்கும்!
டிசம்பர் திங்கள் 3 ஆம் நாள் நிறைவுறும்!!

கேட்ட வரம் தரும் கோட்டாறு புனித சவேரியார்

திருவிழா

கோட்டாறு மேற்றிராசனக் கோவில்

நிகழ்ச்சி நிரல்

24—11—1976 புதன்கிழமை—கொடியேற்றுவிழா

காலை 6-00 மணிக்கு திருப்பலி
மாலை 6-30 மணிக்கு கொடியேற்றம்
மறையுரை, திருப்பலி

விழா நாட்களின் பொதுவான நிகழ்ச்சிகள்

காலை 5-30 மணிக்கு திருப்பலி
6-15 மணிக்கு மறையுரை
6-30 மணிக்கு திருப்பலி
மாலை 6-30 மணிக்கு செபமாலை, மறையுரை, திருப்பலி

25—11—1976 வியாழக்கிழமை காலைத் திருப்பயணிகள்:

6-30 மணிக்கு கார்மல் உயர்நிலைப்பள்ளி
7-30 மணிக்கு இயேசுவின் சிறு சகோதரிகள், குருசடி
மாலைத்திருப்பலி நடத்துவோர்—மரியாயின் சேனை, கோட்டாறு

26—11—1976 வெள்ளிக்கிழமை காலைத்திருப்பயணிகள்:

6-30 மணிக்கு புனித சூசையப்பர் மடம், நாகர்கோவில்
மாலைத் திருப்பலி நடத்துவோர்—குடும்ப நல இயக்கம், கோட்டாறு

27—11—1976 சனிக்கிழமை காலைத் திருப்பயணிகள்

6-30 மணிக்கு புனித லாரன்ஸ் இல்லம், நாகர்கோவில்
7-30 மணிக்கு புனித சிறுமலர் உயர்நிலைப்பள்ளி,
கார்மல்நகர்
9-00 மணிக்கு புனித சவேரியார் ஆரம்ப
நடுத்தரப்பள்ளி, கோட்டாறு

மாலைத்திருப்பலியும் சிறப்பு நிகழ்ச்சியும் நடத்துவோர்
—கத்தோலிக்க சங்கம், கோட்டாறு

28—11—1976 ஞாயிற்றுக்கிழமை காலைத் திருப்பலிகள்:

6-00 மணிக்கு முதல் திருப்பலி
8-00 மணிக்கு 2-வது திருப்பலி
9-30 மணிக்கு எண்ணெய் கூட்டுறவு சங்கம்,
ஆசாரிபள்ளம்

மாலைத்திருப்பலியும் சிறப்பு நிகழ்ச்சியும் நடத்துவோர்
—கத்தோலிக்க வியாபாரிகள்

29—11—1976 திங்கட்கிழமை காலைத் திருப்பயணிகள்

6-30 மணிக்கு திருச்சிலுவைக் கல்லூரி, ரோக்நகர்

மாலைத்திருப்பலியும் சிறப்பு நிகழ்ச்சியும் நடத்துவோர்
—ஆசிரியர்கள்

30—11—1976 செவ்வாய்க்கிழமை—புதுநன்மை விழா

நாள் முழுவதும் நற்கருணை நாதருக்கு ஆராதனை வழிபாடு

காலை 5-30 மணிக்கு திருப்பலி
7-00 மணிக்கு திருப்பலி, புதுநன்மை, நற்கருணை
எழுந்தேற்றம்

நற்கருணை ஆராதனை நடத்துவோர்

காலை	8—9	பாடகர் குழு
	9—10	யேசுவின் திரு இருதய சபை—கோட்டாறு
	10—11	பொது ஆராதனை
	11—12	மரியாயின் சேனை—கோட்டாறு
	12—1	ஞானோபதேசச் சபை & திரேசியன் குழுவினர்
	1—2	இளங்கடை ஊர் மக்கள்
	2—3	நாகர்கோவில் ஊர் மக்கள்
	3—4	வடசேரி ஊர் மக்கள்
	4—4-30	பொது ஆராதனை

மாலை 4-30 மணிக்கு நற்கருணை ஆசீர்வாதம்
6-30 மணிக்கு செபமாலை, மறையுரை, திருப்பலி
மாலைத்திருப்பலியும் சிறப்பு நிகழ்ச்சியும் நடத்துவோர்
—போக்குவரத்து கழக ஊழியர்

1—12—1976 புதன்கிழமை

காலைத்திருப்பலி நடத்துவோர்—பொதுப்பணியாளர்
சமூக நலச் சங்கம்

மாலைத்திருப்பலியும் சிறப்பு நிகழ்ச்சியும் நடத்துவோர்
—கோட்டாறு தெற்குத்தெரு ஊர் மக்கள்

2—12—1976 வியாழக்கிழமை

காலைத்திருப்பலி நடத்துவோர்—கோட்டாறு வடக்குத்தெரு
ஊர்மக்கள்

மாலை 6-30 மணிக்கு மாலை ஆராதனை, மறையுரை,
நற்கருணை ஆசீர்வாதம்

கோட்டாறு ஆயர் அருட்பெருந்தகை

ம. ஆரோக்கியசாமி D. D.

3—12—1976 வெள்ளிக்கிழமை திருவிழாச்சிறப்பு:

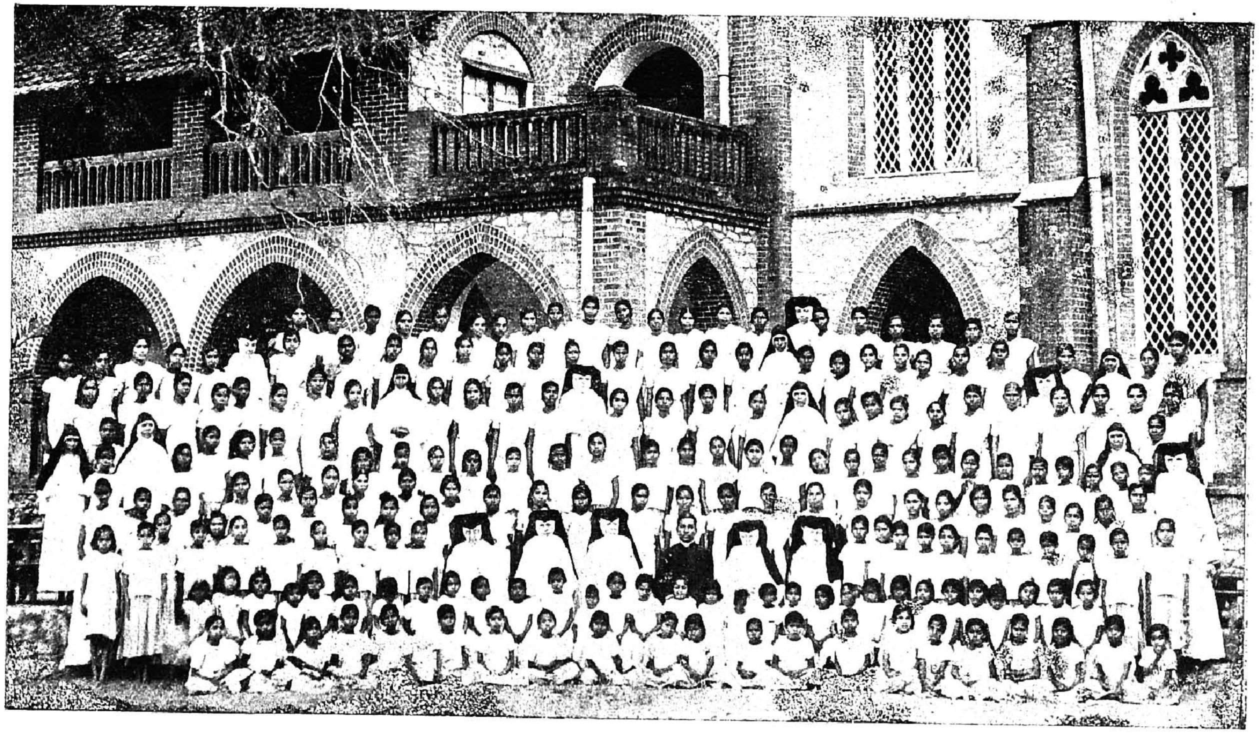
காலை 6-00 மணிக்கு கோட்டாறு ஆயர் அவர்களது
தலைமையில் கூட்டுத்திருப்பலி

குறிப்பு: புனித பிரான்சீஸ் சவேரியார் திருப்பலி நிறைவேற்றிய பீடத்திலே காலை 8-00 மணி முதல் 10-00 மணி வரை தொடர்ந்து திருப்பலி நிறைவேற்றப்படும்.

மேற்றிராசனக்கோவில்,
கோட்டாறு,
15—11—1976.

மறைத்திரு P. ஜோசபாத்,
மறைத்திரு A. சேசுமரியான்,
பங்குத்தந்தையர்.

அசிசி அச்சகம், நாகர்கோவில்



CANONESSES OF ST. AUGUSTINE, WITH THE ORPHANS, MULAGUMUDE.

SISTERS OF THE HOLY CROSS, AT THE DISTRICT HOSPITAL, NAGERCOIL

At the invitation of Bishop Agniswami, they opened their first House, at Thirituapuram, in 1940. There are four other Convents in the Diocese: at Ramanadichemputhur (1942), Siluvaipuram (1947), Manguli (1950) and Melpalai, in the parish of Parakunru (1954), with 23 Sisters in all. Many of them are active in Mission work, visiting villages and houses, preparing converts for baptism, while others are employed as teachers in the schools.

In the fifteen years since their introduction to the Diocese, they have enrolled 46 Sisters, of whom one is dead, besides 3 Lay-sisters. 7 Novices and 2 postulants make a grand total of 54.

SISTERS OF ST. ANNE, ROYAPURAM: The next Congregation to establish itself in the Diocese came from Madras, of which Royapuram is part. Founded in 1863 by an Indian widow at Kilacheri, its Mother-house was later shifted to Royapuram. In 1945 their first Convent was opened at Madathattuvilai and a second at Muttom in 1953. 14 Sisters in these convents are mostly active in education.

From the girls of the Diocese they have already 25 Sisters, besides 6 Novices and 4 postulants.

CONGREGATION OF THE APOSTOLIC CARMEL: Archbishop Bernardine O. C. D. of Verapoly was the founder in 1867 of this Congregation. Through the initiative of the Fathers of the Carmelite Monastery at Thuckalai, its first Convent was opened there in December 1948. The Sisters were immediately entrusted with St. Elias' Primary School, hitherto managed by the Monastery. Another Convent was opened in 1952, at E. Puthenthurai. In the two institutions there are 15 Sisters engaged in teaching.

From the Diocese so far only two have been professed in this Congregation, while two others are in Postulancy.

LITTLE SISTERS OF THE SACRED HEART OF FR. DE FOUCAULD: This Congregation of Contemplative Missionaries was born of the thought, sacrifice and death of the famed martyr of the Sahara, Fr. Charles de Foucauld, in 1933. This recent Congregation came but recently to the Diocese. Three Sisters of this Fraternity, as it is called, came over from France in 1953, of whom one had to return in the following year due to ill-health. They have been busy ever since learning English and Tamil, and looking for a suitable place to open a permanent House. Their Mother-General came over in 1955 for a personal appraisal of the situation. Due to many difficulties, not the least of which is that there are only two Sisters with but a tenuous hope of getting visa for more, their future is as yet unsettled.

To give a fuller picture of Religious Vocation from the Diocese, we may mention the following, though these Congregations are not working here.

In the SOCIETY OF JESUS there was but one priest in 1930. Now it has another (the first one being dead), 4 scholastics, 2 Lay-brothers and a Novice.

BROTHERS OF THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS, Palayamcottai, had as many as 9 members from the Diocese in 1930. Now there are 12, excluding 3 dead; but there are no novices or postulants.

ROSARIAN CONGREGATION of Jaffna; Ceylon, has recruited within a dozen years 9 monks and a novice, as well as 3 nuns and 4 postulants.

SISTERS OF OUR LADY OF DOLOURS, Thiruchirapalli has one Sister and 3 novices.

SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION, Mathurai, has 8 Sisters and 3 novices.

This is by no means an exhaustive list of vocations from the Diocese, for to our certain

knowledge there are still others, priests brothers and sisters, working in various parts of India and Ceylon. What is stressed is the fact of the phenomenal growth of vocations to the Clerical and Religious states, which may surely be considered as a sign of the strengthening in the people of Christian faith and feeling. Parents, who were satisfied to admire the priest or the Sister at a distance, are now eager that their children should be called to their ranks. It is to be noted that though certain parishes lead in the number of vocations, their incidence is well spread out to be termed general. We may also assert that there is every sign that this upward trend will intensify in spite of all the organised evils to which youth is exposed today. While giving heartfelt thanks to the Master of the Vineyard for this signal favour, praise is no doubt due to the Fathers and Sisters already in the field who act as the instruments of Providence in fostering vocations in young men and women within the reach of their influence.

It should be evident also from the foregoing how the work of the Religious has steadily grown in the Diocese. In 1930 there were but three Congregations of women working in the Diocese, with a total of 86 Sisters in 10 Convents. Today there are 7 Congregations in 25 Convents, with a grand total of 200 Sisters. We give below a consolidated list of Congregations, Convents and Sisters, and another of vocations to the religious state, to show at a glance the remarkable increase:—

RELIGIOUS CONGREGATION OF WOMEN

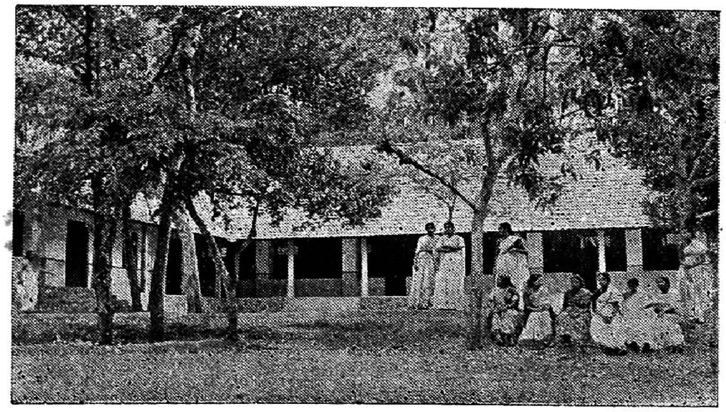
		1930	'35	'40	'45	'50	'55
No. of Congregations		3	3	4	5	6	7
No. of convents		10	10	11	15	19	25
No. of Sisters:	European	41	48	51	52	59	62
	Indian	45	44	49	83	112	138
	Total	86	92	100	135	171	200

VOCATIONS FROM THE DIOCESE

MEN						
Discalced Carmelites:	1	4	5	7	10	11+1 N.
S. Heart Brothers:	9	9	9	10	10	12
Society of Jesus	1	1	2	2	2	7+1 N.
Rosarian Monks:	...	...	...	...	4	9 ... +1 P.
Total:	11	14	16	19	26	39+2 N. + 1 P.
WOMEN						
Mis. Can. of St. Augustine:	31	36	39	52	65	54+2 N.
Im. Heart of Mary:	5	9	15	24	35	47+7 N. + 7 P.
St. Anne, Thiruchi:	...	...	3	12	27	49+7 N. + 2 P.
St. Anne, Royapuram:	...	...	2	2	11	25+6 N. + 4 P.
Holy Cross:	...	...	...	...	...	2+ ... 2 P.
Apostolic Carmel:	...	...	...	...	...	2+2 N.
Im. Conception:	...	...	...	2	4	8+3 N.
Our Lady of Dolours:	...	...	...	...	1	1+3 N.
Total:	36	45	59	92	143	188+30N. + 15 P.

SISTERS OF THE IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY, KADIAPATTANAM
Silver Jubilee of their arrival in the Diocese

SISTERS OF ST. ANNE OF TRICHIRAPALLI
on their first arrival in the diocese, Thiritua puram



AMALA CONVENT, THUCKALAI

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It is to be added that two other Religious Congregations worked in the Diocese for some time, though later they had to leave due to various reasons. The first of these was the BROTHERS OF CHARITY. H. E. Bishop Pereira contacted their Superior General in Belgium in 1934. His representative visited the Diocese, and all negotiations having been successfully concluded, six Brothers came from the English province in February 1935 and took charge of the Carmel English High School and Boarding. Their zeal and attachment to the Institution were remarkable. No one will gainsay that it was in their time that the School as well as the Boarding reached the high-water mark of excellence in all departments: scholarship, numbers, sports and discipline. They began the building of a fine Gothic chapel. But the Second World War intervened and work had to be interrupted. Soon followed the agitations in connexion with Indian Independence. Financial as well as other difficulties forced them to return to England in 1947.

In May of the same year the Madras Province of the SALESIANS OF ST. DON BOSCO took charge of the Carmel School But their stay was brief. In response to a policy of retrenchment with a view to consolidation, the Congregation had to give up all outlying institutions. They retired therefore in May 1950.

It is also to be noted that Bishop Lawrence had plans to start Diocesan Congregations in Kottar. He felt the need of Brothers and Sisters to do Catechetical work as well as to teach in the many schools of the Diocese. He began with a few girls whom he entrusted to the Canonesses for formation. He also erected a building in St. Francis' School Compound to serve as Novitiate for Brothers. His early demise put a stop to these plans. But he was remindful of them to the last. In his Will he made provision for the founding and maintenance of a Catechetical Congregation by leaving for the purpose his own property at Koolachira. Though it has been found so far impracticable to found a new Congregation, the proceeds from the property are used to maintain Sisters and Brothers exclusively employed in the work of evangelisation.

5. FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION

Kottar is not a rich Diocese; on the contrary, it can easily be counted among the very poor of India. When the new Diocese was formed, all the properties of the diocese of Quilon lying within the new territory were made over to it as its portion. But this was not much, and the Diocese cannot be run without aid from outside. The annual subsidy from Rome, generous in the post-war years, is the main stay of the diocese. But for this it would be difficult to maintain many of its present undertakings.

In the Bull of Erection it was decreed that each parish should contribute annually towards the "mensa episcopalis". But because of the poverty of most of them, the amount realised is very nominal indeed.

Poverty is the lot of the vast majority of Catholics in the diocese. Perhaps there is not one of them who could be termed 'rich' according to the international, or even the national standards. Voluntary contributions therefore of appreciable sums cannot be expected from individuals for the building of churches, schools, convents etc., or even for the day to day administration of the parishes. Only united effort could produce even the minimum required, on the principle that many drops make an ocean.

The methods of collection, as well as of administration, of the Coastal parishes, are different from those of the interior, giving rise to different problems and troubles.

Money indeed and its administration have been the cause of innumerable factions

and troubles in many parishes. In times past, the parish priest was practically the sole administrator whose authority was supreme. But days have changed. We are in a period of transition, so much so the people are neither resigned to the older types of administration nor ready for newer forms. Some try to introduce false ideas of democracy into the administration, while others try to retain their old privileges. The laws of the Church in this matter are not seldom disputed, due chiefly to ignorance.

When Bishop Pereira took charge there were many abuses to be remedied: many parishes were burdened with debt; many were rent with factions—all revolving round the financial administration of the parishes. He saw the need for strenuous reform. Agencies were set on foot to study the problems and devise ways and means of combating abuses. Soon he decreed that each parish should submit a statement of assets and liabilities; that all expenses were to be kept well within the income of the parish; that immediate efforts be made to liquidate debts; that no external solemnities for feasts and no new expenditures be undertaken until the debts were cleared; and that a statement of accounts of each parish be submitted to the Curia every quarter of the year. By this it was hoped to inspire greater confidence in the people about the parochial administration and to impose a heavier check on its expenditures. This system worked for some time, but gradually fell into dissuetude, the more easily because the hoped for results did not materialise.

Coastal Parishes

The problem was acute mostly in coastal parishes. It was a legacy from the past. Every Bishop of Quilon had to face it. There were conditions prevailing there that were conducive to such troubles. The annual income of the parishes was very high when compared to the individual capacity of the parishioners. This was due to the system of collecting a portion, from one fifth to one half, of the catch of fish of one day in the week, throughout the year. Collection in kind has been always easier than in cash. There was besides the income from the sale of fins of certain fish of the shark variety, the right to which was in ancient times ceded to the Church by the Maharajahs of Travancore. These fins were cherished in far-off China for the preparation of certain delicacies, and fetched high prices. Another source of income to the church was from a sort of sales-tax collected from merchants who bought fish for disposal elsewhere. All these, when regularly realised, brought to the parish a rich income, often far exceeding its annual needs, so that it was a source of temptation to many, resulting in factions and fights, leading to litigations and law-suits.

The rules were such, founded on immemorial custom, that those who refused any of these contributions were visited with ecclesiastical censures, such as the denial of Sacraments, etc. Time was when such threats had their salutary effect. But with the change of times, they but lead to revolts, with a consequent lowering of the spiritual tone of the parish, and a loss of souls. With the prevalence of new ideas in the air, the whole parochial set up came to be looked upon as a heavy burden. There were not persons wanting who did not scruple to accuse the Church of exploiting the goodwill of the faithful to its own gain!

What made matters worse was the custom, in most parishes, of auctioning out to a contractor the contribution of fish from the parishioners, instead of collecting it directly. The contractor paid an agreed sum of money to the parish in three or four instalments, and collected the contribution of fish through his agents. This method brought in a third party into the picture, who was not seldom a non-Catholic, with the result that any dispute in the parish assumed the shape of tripartite litigations both in the ecclesiastical and, it often happened, in civil courts.

Reforms

An effort was made in 1944 to reform this system, when H. E. Bishop Agniswami authorised a Commission of Fathers to study the whole set up and propose improvements. As a result of this, the contract system was repudiated as the normal way of making income for the parish, so that any default in the contribution could not be punished with ecclesiastical sanctions. As long-term contracts tended to create troubles, it was forbidden to give contracts for more than one year at a time. Lastly the parish priest was forbidden to be a party to it, so that he could not affix his signature to the deed of contract, as was the custom till then. Contributions of fish to the parish was to be done directly week by week, a system known as "sanchayam" in these parts, defaulters thereof being liable to sanctions as before. This reform eliminated one party from the three-cornered fights. Though more sweeping reforms were envisaged, it was thought to be inopportune to enforce them, as both the people and their pastors were not yet weaned from traditional methods.

This arrangement was given a working trail for about ten years. Though this produced great improvement in the administration, there were still some inherent drawbacks which tended to disturb the peace here and there. Thus it was found necessary to set up another Commission of Fathers in 1953. After long and painstaking study, this Commission presented its report, most of the recommendations of which were embodied in the Circular No. 5315 of Bishop Agniswami, issued on Assumption Day in 1954.

By this, a new annual budget of expenses was prepared for each parish, the parishioners being obliged to contribute towards this only. The normal method of Contribution would be by per capita tax, thus giving up the collection in kind. Every Catholic, whether he contributed or not, had a right, subject to Canon Law, to the Sacraments; but non-contributors would not be entitled to certain solemnities of the Church in the administration of Sacraments and sacramentals. Contribution of a share of the fish in the form of contract or "sanchayam" would be considered to be an extraordinary means of income for the parish, to be resorted to only in case of extraordinary need and that with the unanimous consent of the parishioners; this would be subject to absolutely no ecclesiastical sanctions. In the same way, fins and the sales-tax on fish were also to be considered extraordinary sources of income. The normal sources would be, besides the per capita tax, the offerings of the faithful, the proceeds from church-properties and the share accruing to the church from various solemn functions such as marriages, burials, etc.

This reform cut the distrust of the people at its root, and as there was no more question of large amounts to be administered, the motive for mutual suspicious among contending parties has been, to a large extent, done away with. Evidently it is too soon to guage the success of this system, depending as it does on the scrupulous care with which it is worked. But from the experience of more than a year it could be said that it bids fair to succeed. The faithful seem to have grasped the fact, so easily misunderstood so far, that the Church aims only at their betterment. Many villages along the coast are now actively engaged in erecting or renewing their churches, schools or convents, with a measure of peace and quiet very consoling to witness. It is also seen that where the system has been tampered with, factions of the older type do raise their ugly heads, to the detriment of spiritual welfare, not to mention all the trouble and loss of time and money. It is hoped that the peaceful atmosphere created by this system, so conducive to the Christian spirit, will intensify in the course of years.

There have been difficulties of administration in the parishes of the interior also,

though perhaps not to such an extent, nor with such dire consequences as along the coast. What is felt most is the want of uniformity in the method of administration. This surely needs to be remedied. Bishop Agniswami therefore thought it advisable to set up another Commission of Fathers in 1955 to report on necessary reforms. Its report is still awaited.

Diocesan Tariffs for Sacred Functions

The offerings made by the faithful for solemnising various religious functions in their favour, as well as the stipend for Holy Mass, were not uniform in the diocese at its creation. Rates differed from region to region and from parish to parish. Bishop Lawrence Pereira saw the advisability and advantages of enforcing uniform rates. After due study and necessary preparations therefore he enforced the new List of Tariffs for Sacred Functions in the Diocese in January 1934. This served well for nearly twenty years.

Two circumstances made a revision imperative. The first was caused by the integration of Travancore with the new independent India. Travancore under the Maharajahs had its own coinage of fanams, chuckrams and cashes, different from the Rupees, Annas, pies of India. When after the integration the Travancore coinage was abolished, it became necessary to fix the rates according to the Indian monetary system, the more so as much disparity had begun to prevail in parishes in finding the equivalents in Indian money for the prescribed tariffs. The other circumstance was the high rise in living standards after the last World War and the inflation of currency. The old rates became absolutely inadequate for the maintenance of church-servants.

Work was therefore started on a revision in 1953, and the revised List came into force in 1954 on 25th June, the feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

6. EDUCATION

Schools are divided into Primary and Secondary. Primary schools consisted of four classes, though now they have five. The Secondary schools were either English or Vernacular, though now they have been amalgamated to form the new type secondary schools. For clarity therefore we shall consider education under all these various heads, adding a few remarks on technical and college education.

Primary Schools

At the erection of the diocese, there were as many as 75 Primary Schools in the territory, of which 65 were parochial and the rest under the management of Religious Congregations. This, at first sight seems to be a wholesome situation, giving as it does an average of 3 schools per parish. But it is to be remarked that a good many of these schools were incomplete, with but two or three classes, without recognition of the Government and grant-in-aid. In course of time these defects were progressively remedied, and new schools opened wherever needed. This growth reached its peak in 1945 with 93 schools, when the policy of the Government involved them in a struggle for existence.

The policy spawned by the fertile brain of the Dewan (or Minister plenipotentiary) of Travancore, Sir C. P. Ramaswamy Iyer, was to nationalise all schools, and to do it under the laudable cloak of compulsory education. By a Gazette Extraordinary dated 12th September 1945 private primary schools were abolished and all grants to them from the Government were stopped. To meet the difficulty of providing rooms and teachers for the thousands of new students forced to attend school by the new scheme, a shift system was introduced, by which each class will have but three hours and a half of lessons per day, some classes attending in the morning from 9 to 12-30, and the others

in the afternoon from 1-30 to 5. All schools were to be handed over to the Government. Any parent not sending his child to a Government (or public) school could be prosecuted under the Primary Education Act of 18th October of the same year. The whole scheme was to be gradually introduced in the State starting from the south and in the school year 1946—1947.

Accordingly the two taluqs of Agasteeswaram and Tovalai, where the Diocese had 26 Primary Schools, were chosen as the scene of this experiment in nationalisation. The choice was very shrewd, as was to be expected from the Dewan, who was credited to be one of the cleverest men in India. For the north of the State was strongly Christian inhabited by the descendents of the converts of St. Thomas, who were second to none in wealth, education and influence, while Catholics in the south were mostly recent converts, with no pretensions to great wealth or education.

But he was not clever enough to understand the solidarity of militant Catholicism. Catholics of the whole State were up in arms against the scheme, while their brothers in other parts of India hastened to lend moral support. Pastoral letters and directives poured out from the Bishops of Malabar who conferred again and again to concert measures to meet the great threat. H. E. Bishop Kalachery of Changanachery was ordered to be put under arrest for his fiery Circular calling on his people to defend their rights with their lives. But the order could not be executed as the people in their thousands guarded their Pastor day and night. The order had to be revoked. The Dewan did not want to make martyrs! It was his first set back in a country where he had been a virtual dictator.

In the meantime Government was moving strenuously to implement the scheme in the two taluqs. New schools were erected, often near our schools. Recognition of private schools and grants of money, hitherto given to the Managements to help pay the teachers, were stopped by an Order dated 12th March 1946. There was a move to take over our schools by force of arms if necessary.

What emboldened the Government was the sad defection of our brothers in Christianity; the London Mission Society and other Protestants, with the exception of the Lutherans who had very few schools, weakly yielded and surrendered their schools!

But the Catholic people with their pastors and teachers rose to the occasion. For the teachers it was indeed a great sacrifice as they would have received higher pay in the employ of the Government. All united in vigilance to see that the school buildings were not taken over by force. They refused to send their children to the public schools, risking arrest and punishment. As far as possible, they came forward to give financial aid to maintain the schools.

But the heaviest share of the financial burden fell upon the Bishop. Other Bishops of Malabar came forward to help him to a certain extent. For a whole year the storm raged. Committees were set up, meetings organised, resolutions passed and Memoranda with thousands of signatures sent up to His Highness the Maharajah of Travancore pleading for his personal intervention in this desperate situation. Heaven was beseeched in all the churches for a favourable end to this death struggle. Pilgrimages to the shrines of St. Thomas the Apostle at Mylapore and St. Francis Xavier at Kottar were organised defying the prohibitory orders of the Government. It was indeed a glorious fight. The Dewan was loathe to admit defeat; but short of bloodshed and open persecution nothing more could be done to beat down the determined opposition of Catholics.

The times were propitious to our cause. Already India had gained independence and

many of the native States ruled by Maharajah had been integrated with it. Travancore, under the inspiration of the Dewan, had refused to accede. A branch of the National Congress that had wrested independence from the British, was working in the State for its integration with India. The Catholic-School fight was one more weapon for them to use against the domineering Dewan. Matters came to a head, and finally the Dewan had to retire from the State.

Soon after, a sort of compromise was arrived at. Thus far there had been two classes of schools in the State: the Departmental (public) and the Private. In the taluqs where compulsory education had been introduced all the private schools were Catholic. Thereafter they were to be called "Denominational" and not private. They would be given recognition, and some help from the charitable funds of the State, and not, as here to fore, from the Educational funds. This was not much, but at least our schools were recognised by the Government, so that parents now could satisfy the rulings of the Compulsory Education Act by sending their children to our schools. But on the other hand, being denominational schools, they could admit only Catholic children. This had another effect, that Catechism could be taught as an integral part of the curriculum within class hours, which had not been allowed till then.

Due to the provision that only Catholic children could be admitted, a few of our schools had to close down for want of minimum strength. Financial stringency also compelled us to give some overlapping schools. All in all, only 73 schools were given recognition and financial help in 1947.

In the meantime, further negotiations were going on, with success. For in the same year the old system of grant-in-aid to the Management was restored, with retrospective effect, so that the sums due to our schools for the one year of struggle were also sanctioned. Our victory was complete. The architect of the scheme was soon after removed from office, and Travancore acceded to the Indian Union. Its identity was submerged in the new State of Travancore-Cochin, and democratic rule was introduced, power being vested in elected representatives of the people.

But the policy of the Government with regard to private schools had hardened as a result of this fight. Though existing schools were allowed to continue, it became extremely difficult to obtain recognition, much less grant, for new ones. This explains why the diocese shows a stagnation, if not a recession, in the number of primary schools.

The Catholic teachers had stood shoulder to shoulder with their priests and people in this resistance to the external danger. But once this danger was past, some of them were misguided into starting a war of their own, in 1948, in an effort to force the Catholic Authorities to give more pay. Their demands were indeed just, to a certain extent. But the poor Missionary Diocese could do little to meet them. There was much agitation. Ill-contented and irresponsible elements fished in troubled waters. There was much talk of strikes and 'satiagrahas'. But again, the majority of the teachers, realising both that the demands could not be met and much more, that the method of making the demands was unseemly, rallied and the storm blew over.

The Government had been all along approached for bettering the lot of the teachers. United efforts bore fruit, and salaries, which were as low as Rs. 10 per month rose gradually, till today they have reached a level of more than five times that amount, with hopes of more. Now in 1955 there are 81 complete primary schools in the diocese enjoying recognition and grant-in-aid from the Government.

Secondary Schools

Till 1947 secondary schools were bifurcated into the English and the Vernacular

(Tamil or Malayalam). In each class there were Middle Schools and High Schools. In 1947 they were combined into the New Type Middle School or High School, where the vernacular was the medium of instruction, with a prominent place for English as the second language to be learned.

Vernacular Schools

It has to be confessed that the diocese was rather slow in providing facilities for secondary education to the faithful. The generosity and the forethought of Bishop Benziger opened St. Francis Institute in 1907 at Nagercoil with the 3rd and 4th classes (primary section). It was raised to a Tamil Middle School (with 5th, 6th and 7th classes) in the following year. The aim of the Institute was to provide Catholic teachers for the many primary schools in the Diocese which were mostly staffed with non-Catholics. It had a Boarding attached to it in which boys selected from the parishes were gathered under the guidance of a Priest-director. Bishop Benziger fostered it with great affection, generously donating financial aid to maintain it.

When Kottar was erected into a diocese, Very Rev. Fr. Boniface Rebeira was its Director. But already its Boarding was weakening, as there was another Boarding for boys in the Carmel English School within a distance of two miles. In about 25 years it had supplied more than a hundred Catholic teachers to our schools all over the diocese.

Though the Boarding was finally given up, the school continued to flourish. In 1936 Bishop Lawrence Pereira upgraded it to a High School, (with Classes VIII and IX) which closed down in 1947 to give place to the new type Middle School. At present it has two divisions in each form with a total of 175 students. Rt. Rev. J. M. Villavarayan is the Manager.

Next in the field of secondary education was the congregation of Canonesses of St. Augustine who opened a Tamil Middle School for girls at Nagercoil in 1915. This was raised to a High School in 1942, but closed down in 1947 though the last pupils were allowed to be presented for the IXth Class public examination as late as 1950.

In 1930 there were two other Middle Schools, but both incomplete having but the V class. One was St. Mary's School at Colachel, and the other St. Francis Xavier's Malayalam School at Vavarai. In the course of time four other schools were opened, two by the Canonesses for girls, at Mulagumudu in 1931 and at Valliavilai in 1943; one by the parish of Kurusady at Maravankudiyiruppu in 1931, and the last by the Diocese in the mission center at Mangalakunru in 1943. All these were Tamil schools.

Thus in 1947 there were 8 Middle schools of which all but one (at Maravankudiyiruppu) were converted into New Type Middle Schools.

For those who aspire to become teachers one year of special training is required. For the Lower Grade Training (of those who had passed the VII Cl.) St. Lawrence's Training School was opened in 1935 at Madathattuvilai. It closed down after three years of service. Another training school was opened, for girls, by the Canonesses at Mulagumudu, both for the Lower and the Higher Grade. It continues to train teachers to this day.

English Schools

The Canonesses of St. Augustine and the parish of Cape Comorin compete for first place in the honour list of English Schools. St. Joseph's Convent, Nagercoil, opened a Middle School for girls in 1921, raising it to a High School in 1924. It is a flourishing institution today with more than 700 pupils on its roll.

At Cape Comorin there was a Tamil Middle School as early as 1917. This was discontinued in 1921 and was replaced with St. Anthony's English Middle School, through the initiative of its parish priest, Rev. Fr. (now Rt. Rev. Mgr.) Vincent Fernandez Sr.

But a central school to teach English was wanting in the diocese. Bishop Benziger remedied this in 1922 when at Kottar the Carmel English Middle School was opened, with a Boarding attached so that boys from all over the south could benefit by it. Rev. Fr. Bernard Gonsalvez was its first Manager with Rev. Fr. Antony Pereira B. A. as the Head Master. The school opened with the Preparatory Class and Forms I and II simultaneously.

At the formation of the diocese, Rev. Fr. Paul Stephen was the Manager. Bishop Lawrence was anxious to provide facilities to the boys for higher education. It was therefore upgraded into a High School in 1932 with Rev. Fr. Vincent Fernandez B,A. as the Manager and Head Master. In 1934 a new building was erected to house the High School.

At the invitation of Bishop Lawrence, the Brothers of Charity from Liverpool, England, came over in February 1935 to take charge of the school and Boarding. Rev. Fr. Vincent Fernandez, however, remained the Manager and Head Master till his appointment as the Vicar General in May 1944. The combined efforts of the Manager and the Brothers won all-State fame for the school in all fields of activity. Students from the town and all over the diocese, nay even from outside, came flocking to the school. A bus was bought to transport the day-scholars to and from the school. It was indeed a time of great success.

In 1947 it was converted into a new type High School. Through the multiplication of schools all over the State, giving easy access to the student population, the usefulness of Carmel as a central institution began to suffer, so that the Boarding was closed in 1951 and the 'bus given up soon after. There are today 378 boys attending the school, the vast majority being Catholics. Rev. Fr. Paul Sebastian Fernando is the Manager.

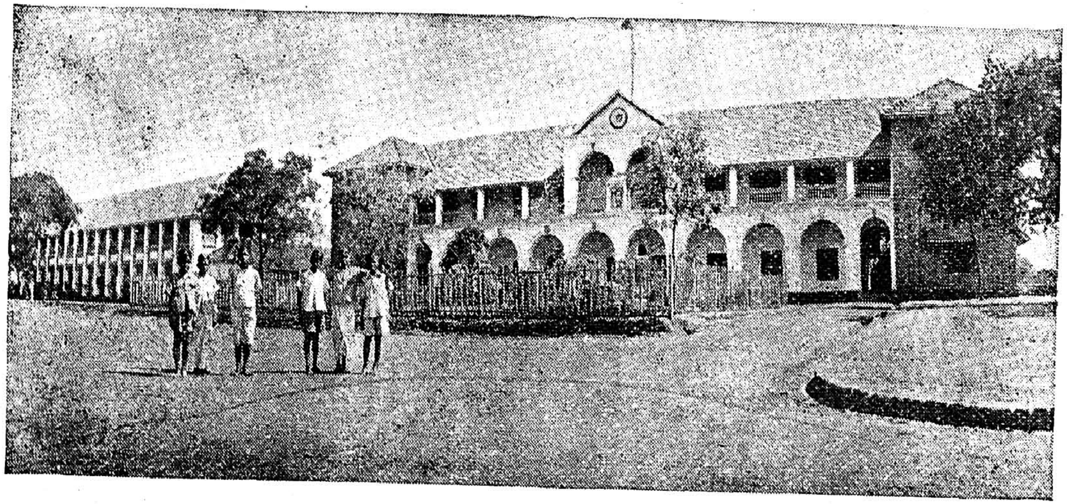
The parish of Madathattuvilai opened a Middle School in 1931 through the vigorous efforts of its pastor Rev. Fr. Pathrose Fernandez, whose early death in 1933 was a great loss to the infant diocese. Situated in a thickly populated region, the school was a success from the beginning.

There is a gap of about eighteen years before any new schools appear on the scene. The cost of running a secondary school was prohibitive. Besides the erection of the building and the supplying of all equipments and furniture, the Management had to pay monthly the staff. The only source of income was the meagre collection of fees from the pupils, whose poverty often made it impossible to be too strict. Concessions had to be granted to many. The Cape School in fact gave free education to all Catholic pupils. But this could not be attempted elsewhere. The parishes were too poor or too indifferent to open new schools.

New Type Secondary Schools

With independence came a spirit of nationalism in every walk of life. English, the official language of India, became a symbol of the hated subjection to the British Raj. There were loud demands from everywhere for giving more prominence to the local vernaculars. The system of education was radically overhauled. The result was the new type secondary school.

As in this new set up the distinction between English and Vernacular schools was done away with, all existing secondary schools were either to be converted into the new type or closed. Where there were both, one had



CARMEL HIGH SCHOOL, NAGERCOIL.

to be suppressed, as happened to the Tamil High Schools of St. Joseph's Convent and St. Francis' Institute, both at Nagercoil.

With independence too came a longing among the people, encouraged by the Government, for education. The need for new schools became more and more urgent, and soon many schools were opened.

Cape Comorin again took the lead. Thanks to the efforts of its pastor Rev. Fr. Maria Ephraem Gomez, who had to meet great opposition on the part of the Department as well as of a neighbouring town, St. Anthony's was raised to a High School in 1948. Though there are two other schools near to it, it is a flourishing institution. Rev. Fr. Josaphat Maria is the present Manager.

Next the Sisters of Apostolic Carmel from Ernakulam opened a Middle School for girls at Thuckalai in 1949, that became a High School in the following year.

Madathattuvilai was not to be left behind. The initiative of Very Rev. Fr. D. C. Anthony bore fruit, and in the same year St. Lawrence was raised to a High School. Rev. Fr. M. Susai Michael is the Manager now.

In the following year Rev. Fr. Jacob Lopez opened a Middle School at Muttom and installed the Sisters of St. Anne of Raya puram to teach therein.

E. Puthenthuray came into the picture in the following year. The Congregation of Apostolic Carmel were in charge of the new Middle School. Rev. Fr. Francis Borgia Peters was the power behind its foundation.

The next was at the mission center of Thirituapuram started by the initiative of Very Rev. Fr. Maria Ephraem Gomez, its Manager.

The Carmelite Missionaries of Manalikarai succeeded in bringing a Middle School to their people in 1953. Rev. Fr. Lucas Paul O. C. D. M. was the first Manager.

In 1954 three more Middle schools were opened:- the first at Kil-Asaripallam by Rev. Fr. Henry A. Pereira; the second in the mission territory of Parakunru, at Melpalai, by Rev. Fr. T. James, with the Sisters of St. Anne of Thiruchirapalli in charge; and the last at Ramanputhur (Nagercoil,) in the parochial district of Kurusady by its P. P. Very Rev. Fr. D. C. Antony, Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary being in charge of this institution for girls.

Through the policy of the Government it becomes more and more difficult to obtain permission to open new schools. A deposit of Rs. 1500/- for Middle Schools and Rs. 3000/- for High Schools is demanded by the Government as financial security for each new school. The only alleviation in this extra burden is that the amount may be deposited in annual instalments. Nationalisation of schools seems to be on the programme of, the State-Government, the determined opposition of Christians alone standing in the way of its implementation. Christians form a considerable minority in the State being about one third of the total population. For our Christian friends of the Protestant persuasion have learnt wisdom after the debacle of the Compulsory Education Act, and are now standing shoulder to shoulder with the Catholics in fighting for the independence of their schools.

Secondary School Struggles

Not longer after winning the fight for the independence of our primary schools, the Church had to struggle to safeguard its secondary schools in the new state of Travancore-Cochin, in spite of the fact that the National Congress was in power with a good proportion of Christians both in the Legislatures and in the Ministry.

The fight was set off by the strike of the teachers in private secondary schools asking for higher pay, security of service, promotion by seniority and other favours which were

being enjoyed by their colleagues in public schools. Without giving it the name of nationalisation, the Minister of Education considered it the best opportunity to achieve the same end by more subtle means. For it was evident that, at the rate of fees collected from the pupils, the private agencies could in no way meet the demands for higher pay and regular increments thereon. And if the Government was to come to the aid of the Managements, it should be on its conditions only.

In August 1950 the first rumblings of the colossal struggle were heard. The first of many conferences of Managers with the Government took place. It is not our aim to give here a complete history of the fight, shot by shot, or even battle by battle. Suffice it to say that some conditions were insisted upon, which would gradually, if not immediately, affect adversely the independence of private shools. The main proposals were:–

1. That the Management pay into the Government Treasury 87½% (later reduced to 80%) of the fees collected per month. The amount thus accruing to the State would be pooled to form an Education Fund, from which the Government would pay the teachers at an enhanced rate, making good any deficits from its treasuries.

2. That the teachers would be paid directly by the Government, to make sure that they receive their salaries without fail!

3. That the Head Masters should be appointed according to seniority.

4. That the managements be required, in the appointment of teachers, to select from a list published by the Public Service Commission of the Government. No one could be appointed from outside. Later this was modified to mean that a committee of seven consisting of the Director of Public Instruction, four representatives of Managers and two of Teachers would be the Board of Selection for preparing this list.

Though on the surface these conditions look innocuous, they were nevertheless the thin end of the wedge of nationalisation. The payment into the treasury of the major part of the fees is evidently a form of the socialistic principle of pooling all to pay all by the Government. Direct payment to teachers too cut at the efficiency of private schools, as the Manager could have absolutely no control over the staff that was being paid independently of him. The appointment of teachers from an official list made his position still weaker. If the Church insists on maintaining schools, it is but to impart a Christian atmosphere to the institution and a Christian education to the students. How can this be safeguarded if he has no freedom in selecting teachers and appointing Head Masters? Seniority can never be a criterion for a Head Master. There was an appearance of insidious introduction of nationalisation in all this, so that the Christian Managers, under instruction from their Bishops, were constrained to reject the proposals in toto.

But the teachers were restive. They had hoped for an immediate raise in pay, provided the Managers agreed to these conditions. There were strikes in some schools. Some teachers attempted, with the connivance of the Education Department, to seize control of the schools. Unfortunate incidents were not wanting. The general population of parishes was naturally involved. Factions appeared, some sympathetic to the teachers, others standing with the Manager. Criminal proceedings were not far off. To make matters worse, there was not full unanimity as to what was quite against Christian principles, and what could be accepted without jeopardising the safety of our schools. All these were made the most of by the Government, who hoped thus to wear us out into final acceptance.

After protracted negotiations, struggles, conferences public and private, a modus vivendi was arrived at which was embodied

in the Private Secondary School Scheme. By this the Management and the Government were parties to an agreement which provided that the Management paid into the Government treasury, but in the name of the Manager, 80% of the fees month by month, retaining the other 20% for contingent expenses; that the Government would pay to the Manager what was required to pay the teachers according to an enhanced rate fixed by the Government. If there was any surplus from the deposits made by the Manager, it would be held over in the name of the school, and the accruing amount could be utilised for any capital expense of the school with the previous approval of the Department.

Other points in the compromise were that the Head master should 'ordinarily' be appointed according to seniority. But there was room for exception for sufficient reasons. The scheme about selecting teachers from an approved list was resisted with such vigour that it had to be given up. Government does publish such a list annually, but the Management is free to utilise it. Evidently he could only appoint teachers who had the minimum educational qualifications fixed by the Department.

All this may seem as though we have finally won the victory. But in the actual working of the agreements and in the running of the school we are not yet fully out of the woods. Rules and regulations continue to pour out of the Department that gradually tend to curtail the powers of the Managers. This affects adversely the efficiency of our schools, except those staffed by priests or Religious. It is feared that the desire to nationalise all schools is still there, though for the time a go-slow policy may have been adopted.

But it is to be added that the new scheme has considerably lightened the financial burden of Managements, at the same time giving to the teachers a higher rate of pay, nearer to what is their due from a strict point of justice.

It was due to this alleviation of the financial burden that many parishes came forward to open new secondary schools. The fight therefore has been a blessing in disguise!

In reading the consolidated statistics that follow, what has been so far detailed should be kept in mind: how because of the introduction on the New Type School, two Tamil High Schools and a Tamil Middle School had to be suppressed, and how because of the imposition of Denominational schools, many Primary Schools had to be given up for want of minimum strength.

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS

GRADE		1930	35	40	45	50	55
Primary:		74	82	82	85	86	81
Secondary:	Middle:	6	10	10	11*	12	18
	High:	1	2	3	4**	5	5
	TOTAL	81	94	95	100	103	104

* A school was suppressed
** Two schools given up

THE STUDENT POPULATION

YEAR	BOYS		GIRLS		TOTAL		G. TOTAL
	Cath.	Non-Cath.	Cath.	Non-Cath.	Cath.	Non-Cath.	
1930	4411	1377	4168	751	8579	2128	10707
1935	4896	2292	4484	1149	9380	3441	12821
1940	6110	2410	4421	1794	10531	4204	14735
1945	5826	3068	6186	2503	12012	5571	17583
1950	8949	912	8942	613	17891	1525	19416
1955	9462	2461	9990	2374	19452	4835	24287

From these lists, it is evident first that though there has been no spectacular increase in the number of schools, there has been ample growth. In the field of secondary education especially greater attention has been concentrated. If there are not many more schools, it may partly be blamed on the Government which has been very difficult in granting necessary permission and recognition.

The other evident fact is the enormous increase of the student population. The striking number of girls who attend schools is noteworthy. Unlike her sister in other parts of India, the girl of this State is fully awake to her potentialities and, with the full endorsement of her parents, is determined to make her way in the world. Many girls are thus found not only in High Schools, but also in Colleges, Nursing Schools, Technical Institutes and Training Centers. They have begun to enter the professions such as teaching, medical and legal practices etc. All this may be commonplace among the nations of the West, but is indeed revolutionary as far as India is concerned. That our girls are able to stand up to the demands of public life without sacrificing their innate modesty and dignity is a matter for gratulation.

College Education

The diocese has no Catholic College within its district. Though there has been a tendency, in recent years, of multiplying Colleges, all over Travancore-Cochin, the diocese is too poor to start one of its own. It may also be added that, with two Catholic Colleges with fifty miles, one in Trivandrum and the other at Palayamcottai, the need for another is not very pressing.

There are two Colleges in the district, both situated at Nagercoil. Most of our students, for reasons of economy, are forced to attend them, though one belongs to the United Church of South India, and the other is avowedly a Hindu College. To safeguard the faith of these young men and women, a Catechetical center has been organised in St. Francis School, which is located between the two Colleges, where most of the students come, according to a time table, for religious instruction. Rev. Fr. Benedict Alexander, Ph. L., S. T. L., is in charge of this programme. Though many are enthusiastic of this arrangement, it cannot be said that the attendance and the interest shown are quite satisfactory. Efforts have been made to make the classes attractive, and valuable prizes are offered to successful candidates at the end of the year.

A crying need that has been acutely felt is for a convenient Hostel for the College students. For want of this, many who come from outside the town are forced to take lodgings that are in more ways than one very unsatisfactory. It may be that the adolescents are exposed to irresistible temptations at the most formative period of their lives, for want of a hostel where they could be properly watched over and guided. H. E. the Bishop has taken this matter to heart, and it is hoped that soon suitable arrangements would be made.

Financial Helps

The diocese is directly conducting the Carmel High School and St. Francis Middle School, both at Nagercoil. All the Primary and Middle schools in the Mission Stations receive necessary help from diocesan funds-for building, maintenance, furniture and the day to day expenses.

A large sum of money is annually distributed as help to deserving students, especially in the High Schools and Colleges. As our people are uniformly poor, such a help is invaluable, as without it a goodly percentage of students would have to discontinue. Such helps go not only towards tuition fees, but also to buying books and even clothes for poor students.

There are two scholarships, both in the Carmel High School: one in the name of

H. E. Bishop Lawrence Pereira, established by his friends and admirers after his demise; the other in the name of Rev. Fr. Vincent Fernandez B. A., L. T., organised on the occasion of his Sacerdotal Silver Jubilee as a memorial to his invaluable services to Carmel. These scholarships are awarded annually to the most deserving students in the High School section.

Rev. Fr. Vincent Fernandez B.A., L.T., had announced the formation of a fund for another scholarship, also for Carmel. It is expected that it will soon be in operation.

It is hoped that more benefactors and well-wishers would come forward to establish such scholarships. This would be a worthwhile means of ensuring a lasting memorial to themselves or to their friends, as well as a great help and encouragement to deserving students.

Technical Schools

So far no technical school has been opened in the diocese for boys. For girls most of the convents provide technical education, mostly in embroidery and lace-making. By this the girls obtain not only instruction that would be useful to them in their future homes, but also present employment that is of great help to a great many, as it supplements the meagre income of their poor parents and provides a form of cottage industry to keep idle hands busy.

The largest technical school is run by the Canonesses of St. Augustine in their convent at Mulagumudu. Other convents of their Congregation also give instructions, each specialising in one form or other; thus the Convent at Cape Comorin goes in for Venetian Lace. The work of the girls in these schools have received all-India fame in many Exhibitions, as the many gold medals in their possession testify.

The Sisters of the Immaculate Heart of Mary usually teach embroidery and garment-making, while till recently the Sisters of St. Anne, both of Thiruchirapalli and of Royapuram, taught spinning and weaving. But due to the general slump in the Weaving Industry in India, this had to be given up.

Catholic Teachers

The diocese has had the interest of the teachers always at heart. The great potentialities of teachers for good or evil is well known. Having the formation of children in their most impressionable age, the teacher can be a source of immense help to the Church, or of untold harm. It is therefore to the advantage of the Church to have well-trained and disciplined teachers who are an example to the children, and an edification to the faithful.

We have already mentioned the great interest of Bishop Benziger in the training of Catholic Teachers for Catholic Schools. His successors have also done their best for teachers. A meeting of the Catholic Teachers of the Diocese was held in St. Francis School, Nagercoil, as early as 1931, September, 5, in which rules and regulations were framed and the Association of Catholic Teachers of Kottar was inaugurated, under the patronage of Bishop Lawrence Pereira. The main aims of this Association were: to strengthen the teachers in their knowledge of and love for the Faith; to watch over their interests and to work for the amelioration of their salaries and working-conditions; to maintain co-operation and understanding between the teachers and the managers of schools.

Till his resignation in 1947, Rev. Fr. Vincent Fernandez B. A., L. T., was the President of this Association. An Annual Meeting was held during Summer Vacation, when accounts were submitted and matters of interest to the teachers discussed and helpful resolution passed. There were also regional meetings, usually under the Vicar Forane of the district, when papers of catechetical interest were read and discussed. The executive board met once in every quarter.

Members of the Association had the right to join the Catholic Teachers' Provident Fund of the Diocese of Kottar which was simultaneously started with a view to help the teachers to save something for the future. They are supposed to contribute a half anna per Rupee, the Manager giving a similar amount. The Patron, the Bishop of Kottar, gives an annual donation which is divided equally among the contributing members. Rules are so framed as to discourage anyone from drawing upon this reserve fund too early, so that when he retires from work, he would have a sizable sum to fall back upon.

The Association is not so active now, for various reasons, though the Fund is working well. To adapt it to changing conditions of the post-war world, the Rules of both the Association and the Fund were revised in a general Meeting of the members held on 12th May 1949. From 1948 Rt. Rev. J. M. Villavarayan has been the President.

To help the spiritual life of the teachers, annual Retreats were organised for them as early as 1928. As most of the parishes now have their own Retreats in which the teachers too mostly take part, it has been found unnecessary to incur the additional expenses of an exclusive Retreat year by year...Besides many of them attend the Catholic Action Conferences and Summer Schools which are as tonic to their apostolic life.

7. SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

The first and foremost mission of a diocese, as that of the Universal Church, is evidently the salvation and sanctification of souls. That all that have been detailed above have this for their ultimate aim goes without saying. The division of parishes, the training of seminarists, the founding of schools and other institutions, the labour of Religious Congregations—all tend to this great goal. This chapter will give a brief account of the various devotions and associations that further, as well as manifest, the spiritual welfare of the faithful of this diocese.

Confraternities

All the parishes along the Coast and a few in the interior have what are known as 'Dressed Confraternities.' These are really Third Orders of the laity, with an imitation of a clerical dress, with capes and scapulars, used when they are on official duty. They usually take the place of the clergy in liturgical processions and other functions. They are expected to gather for special prayers once a week, and receive the sacraments once a month. The women too enter these confraternities in large numbers, though they are satisfied with wearing the appropriate scapulars.

A large number of these Confraternities are of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, while others are of the Most Blessed Sacrament, of the Sacred Heart of Jesus, of Our Lady of Sorrows, of St. Joseph, etc. Some parishes have a second confraternity, usually of Bona Mors, that concerns itself mostly with burials and the deliverance of the Holy Souls from purgatory.

Their dresses as well as their traditions point to a Portuguese origin. The names of the officials, the dresses and insignia are evidently corrupt Portuguese words. They are so much entrenched in tradition and long-standing customs and privileges that often membership is sought for the honour rather than for the spiritual benefits that should accrue. In a few parishes reforms have been effected for their betterment. An effort was made to make this universal for the diocese at the end of 1954. But so far much success has not attended this.

Devotions

Devotion to the Brown scapular of Our Lady of Mount Carmel is quite widespread in all the parishes. Having been ruled by Carmelite Bishops and Missionaries for long, this was to be expected. It is common for the boys and girls to be vested with the scapular on their First Communion Day. In

some parishes there is the custom of imposing the scapular on babies directly after their baptism, so that the scapular makes them children of the Blessed Mother whom the saving waters have just given birth to as the children of God. This devotion received an increase in 1951 when the Seventh Centenary of the Scapular was celebrated throughout the diocese.

The Rosary finds a special place of honour in the hearts of the faithful. It has been the custom in many parishes to recite it in common every day, mostly in the evening, so that it has become the vesper devotion of the people. Good Christian families are particular to recite it daily in their homes, which grand custom became greatly widespread in 1955 by the visit of the world-famous Fr. Patrick Peyton and his Family Rosary Crusade. More than a hundred thousand took the pledge to be faithful to the Family Rosary as a result of this well-organised drive.

The Apostleship of Prayer and the League of the Sacred Heart of Jesus too find their adherents in almost all the parishes of the diocese. Enthronement of the Sacred Heart in the homes as well as Night Adoration are spreading among the people. The devotion of the Holy Hour is practised in almost all the parish churches.

The First Saturday devotion to the Immaculate Heart of Mary is also widespread. It received added impetus from the visit of the Pilgrim Virgin of Fatima in 1950. Her requests to the world are fostered by the Blue Army of which a couple of units are active in the diocese.

Sodality of the B. V. M.

From less than a dozen units in 1930, the Sodality of Our Lady has come to be established in every parish. Nay, some parishes have more than one unit, so that there are today 75 of them in the diocese. Seeing their vast development and their potentialities for good, especially after the directive of Pope Pius XII that the members interest themselves in Catholic Action, H. E. the Bishop appointed in 1954 a Diocesan Director of Sodalities in the person of Rev. Fr. Paul Sebastian Fernando. As he is also the Diocesan Ecclesiastical Assistant to Catholic Action groups, the work of coordination of efforts and division of labour in Catholic activities has been facilitated. Similarly the same regional divisions and directors as for Catholic Action tend to greater efficiency. The regions are:-

1	Kottar	Director:	Rev. Fr. Benjamin Vaz.
2	Colachel:	,,	,, Jacob Lopez.
3	Mulagumudu:	,,	,, R. Anthony
4	Thirituapuram:	,,	V. Rev. Fr. Mary Ephraem Gomez.

Simultaneously a Central Committee was formed for the Diocesan Federation of Sodalities, consisting of:—

Miss Y. Theresammal	(Karangadu)	President
Mrs. Rose Mary	(Kallithattu)	Vice-President
Miss S Charolette Grace	(Manakudy)	Secretary
,, V. Maria Josephine	(Kurusady)	Joint-Secretary
,, S. Packiam	(Pillatope)	Treasurer
,, Maria Michael	(Kandanvilai)	Committee Member
Mr. S. Robert	(Kalkurichi)	,, ,,
Miss L. Mary Porthammal	(Colachel)	,, ,,
,, S. Maria Irudhayam	(Enayam)	,, ,,
,, Mary Joyce	(Thirituapuram)	,, ,,
,, Xaveriai Adimai	(,,)	,, ,,
,, A. Catherine	(Mel-Asaripallam)	,, ,,

If the ladies dominate the Committee it is but a reflection of the fact that of the more than 2000 sodalists the vast majority belong to the female sex. Though originally founded by the Society of Jesus for boys and men, over here it is the women who have taken it to their heart. They are faithful to its rulês as far as is allowed by the very restricted freedom that Indian customs give to women. As a measure of their activities we could point out a dozen or more Grottoes of Our Lady of Lourdes built by their initiative and the many Retreats for women organised annually by them.

Catholic Action

Catholic Action, in its restricted sense, was introduced rather late in the diocese. Its beginnings were rather slow. Its aims and implications were perhaps too revolutionary for our poor people, most of whom could not boast of any great intellectual attainments. But considering the importance attached to it by recent Popes, H. E. Bishop Agniswami insisted again and again on the formation of units in every parish, if possible. When there were but 7 units in 1946, Rev. Fr. Paul Sebastian Fernando was appointed Diocesan Ecclesiastical Assistant. He had a parish of his own to look after and thus his activities were rather circumscribed. It was in 1948 that he was given such assistance as to free him, when needed, to go round the parishes encouraging the people as well as their pastors, and forming units wherever there was scope. Soon units multiplied upto 51. But all were not fit to be consolidated. Today there are 32 well-organised groups, both of men and women. The scope of activities of women is greatly restricted, so that units for them are not so numerous.

The 32 units with a total membership of more than 500 are divided into four regions, as for the Sodalities, with the same priests acting as Regional Ecclesiastical Assistants. Each region has its own regional committee besides the Diocesan Central Committee of which the present members are:—

President:	Mr. C. Varuvel (Puthukadai)
Vice-President:	Mr. C. Maria Sebastian (Madathattuvilai)
Secretaries:	Mr. T. Alphonse B. A. (Mulagumudu) and
	Mr. C. D. Johnson (Pallam)
Treasurer:	Mr. G. Maria Nayagam (Colachel)
Members:	Messrs. Y. Peter Thankiah (Palliadi)
	S. Gabriel (Thirituapuram)
	S. Maria Dhas (Kallithattu)
	P. X. Jerome (Muttom)
	D. Stanislaus (Ritapuram)
	G. Jones (Manakudi) and
	S. Maria Antony B. A. (Sarel)

The central committee meets frequently to formulate over-all plans for the activities of the various units. Members of the committees of various units gather semi-annually to revitalize their spirit of service. Two Catholic Action Congresses have been organised, and four Summer Schools, at which outstanding Actionists from Tamilnad were called in to form the members and to train leaders.

Though the achievements of Catholic Action in the diocese may not be spectacular, it has given a most welcome awakening among the laity to their position in the Church Militant. Organised cooperation with the clergy is no longer strange to them. And they have come to realise that there are spheres of action which the clergy cannot hope to reach with any success. The realisation is growing that the Actionists can do immense

good in the various fields of Apostolate. This is all to the good. It is to be remembered that in most parishes the gap between the priest and the laity is very great in education, culture and general outlook. The people have been accustomed to look up to him, not only as their spiritual guide, but also as their leader in all social and material undertakings. This may be good in itself, provided it does not reflect a sense of helplessness and total dependence that expects everything to be done by him. This has been the state in most of the parishes, in varying degrees. All this is changing, through education, and a feeling of self-respect and self-reliance engendered by the recently-won political independence together with a greater awareness of the democratic set up of the world today. In fact, there is the opposite danger of looking down upon the priests as medieval bogies, or according to Communist propaganda, as something far worse, modern evils to be ruthlessly uprooted and trampled upon. The introduction of Catholic Action is very providential as it is beginning to bring that rapproachement between the clergy and the laity, and that united effort towards a common goal, which is the happy medium between the two extremes.

Various are the fields in which the different units have been active, according to the needs of particular place and times. Usually over-all plans are discussed and decided upon in the Central Committee that meets every quarter in the year, to be passed down to the units through their respective regional committees. Besides, necessities of the Region or of the parish dictate other courses of action. To mention a few that have been successfully tackled till now, there have been works of conversion, teaching of catechism on Sundays to children and youth, supervision of the Family Rosary Crusade, introduction of the Enthronement of the S. Heart in homes, preparation of the sick and dying for the Sacraments, and many such directly spiritual forms of apostolate. Many parishes have benefited, and their general tone improved, through Catholic Action. The effects of such activities on the Actionists themselves should be incalculable.

They have been active too in the Apostolate of the Press, trying to popularise their diocesan Monthly in Tamil, called THENOLI, as well as other Catholic publications, encouraging the reading of the Gospels and other books of devotion and sound instruction. All this is greatly needed in this part of the country where both the economic and literary poverty of the bulk of the population looks upon books and book-reading as superfluous luxuries. Reading Rooms and Libraries have been established in some centers through the Actionists.

In the social sphere too Catholic Action has been active, trying to instil habits of thrift in the people, chiefly through a sort of Savings Scheme, that encourages them to put by something, however small, day by day; helping the very needy with food and clothes; attempting rehabilitation, enabling the poor to begin a small business or trade so that they can gain their livelihood with self-respect; finding suitable employment for the unemployed, etc. Evidently these are not on a large scale, nor common to all the units. We cannot expect it, considering the financial status of the people, including the Actionists themselves. But it may be said that a beginning has been made, a feeling created, that the laity can help one another without expecting every thing to be given from outside through the clergy.

Legion of Mary

Another form of Apostolate that has been recently introduced into the diocese is the Legion of Mary. As early as 1937 a Praesidium was started in the parish of Kurusady, Nagercoil, and later another at St. Joseph's Convent, also at Nagercoil. But they were not very active and the Legion may be said to have languished in the diocese. In 1953

an envoy, as he is called, came from the Bombay Senatus to activate this field. Madras took over and another envoy paid more than one visit. The result is that there are 31 Praesidia in the diocese now, divided into two Curiae.

The Kottar Curia has 17 Praesidia, both Senior and Junior, with 153 active and 179 auxiliary members. Its officials are:—

Spiritual Director:	Rev. Fr. Paul Sebastian Fernando
President:	Mrs. Lourdhe Simon (Nagercoil)
Vice-President:	Mr. S. P. Vincent Fernando B. A., (Covalam)
Secretary:	Mr. Anthony Rajah (Nagercoil)
Treasurer:	Mr. G. Francis (Kandanvilai)

The Thirituapuram Curia has 14 Praesidia, with 320 active and 100 auxiliary members. The office-bearers are:—

Spiritual Director:	Very Rev. Fr. Mary Ephraem Gomez
President:	Mr. G. Mariandran (Thirituapuram)
Vice-President:	Miss Gnanamma
Secretaries:	Mr. C. Maria Michael B. Sc.
	Miss A. Retnam
Treasurers:	Miss Joyce
	Miss A. Mary Joyce

The Legionaries are silently but effectively working according to their constitution. Under the protection of the Mother of God their labours have already borne much fruit. It is hoped that the Legion will grow and multiply in the diocese.

There are other pious associations and societies in different parishes that aim at the sanctification of its members, such as Eucharistic Crusades etc. But they lack central organisation. Mention of them is omitted here, as a mere cataloguing of names would serve little.

Feasts and Festivals

The celebration of feasts and festivals give ample occasion to the people to renew their fervour. The Indian people are extremely fond of such celebrations, as is to be expected from those who, still free from sophistication, keep close to nature. The patronal feast of a church is seldom a parish feast in the sense that there is usually a large attendance from other parishes. Neighbours, relatives and friends gather to solemnize the occasion. With very little entertainment in their drab, hard lives, these feasts provide some colour and adventure to them. But it all usually redounds to the glory of God, as most of these visitors and the bulk of the local parishioners would consider it quite amiss if they failed to make their confession and receive Holy Communion there. A number of priests would be available for the purpose, so that those on the look-out for a change of confessor could have their pick.

The feast is prepared for by a Novena which starts off solemnly and ceremoniously with the hoisting of a flag or two. Many parishes have permanent flag-staffs in front of the church, others erect them temporarily. The flag is usually white, with a red cross on it, or the picture of the Patron Saint. More than one flag may be hoisted after a solemn procession in which the vicar takes part in surplice and cope. The flags are blessed and incensed, and then hoisted to the accompaniment of music, and at times the acclaim of the populace. The feast has begun. The

flags which will be flying day and night, will be taken down with equal pomp and piety only after the feast is over. This is an example of the adaptation by the church of a local custom.

The car-procession is another example of adaptation. A four-wheeled car made of wood, and rising to a height of twenty feet or more, is beautifully decorated with coloured papers and pictures. In it will be enthroned a statue of the Patron or of Our Blessed Mother. The car is then dragged around the parish with great pomp. Indian musical instruments are played all through the procession. Crowds of pious people come behind reciting aloud the Rosary and other appropriate prayers. At every corner the car stops for special prayers. All parishes do not have such car-processions. But they are always attractive to the people, who throng to these car-festivals. They consider it a great favour to be able to take part in the pulling of the car.

There is also the other variety of procession in which the statue is carried in a sort of decorated palánquin on the shoulders of the faithful. This indeed is the more common form, as it lends itself to narrow and winding streets and sandy places where the car could not be used. These "palanquins" called "sapparam" in these parts, are of varying shape and size. They could be as low as three feet or as high as fifteen or more.

What distinguishes these processions from those of our Hindu friends is the faith and piety of the participants. Order and decorum, silence and prayer of the Christian processions usually contrast violently with the noise and confusion of the others. Though they are not liturgical, no doubt they serve to inspire in the people feelings of devotion and fervour.

Missions and Retreats

It has become an almost universal custom to have a Mission preached in every parish during the Novena preceding the Patronal Feast. The services of some well-known preacher are engaged, and the people crowd the church morning and evening to hear the mysteries of our holy religion explained to them. It may happen that a parish has more than one Mission in a year, as the different confraternities and sodalities may also arrange to have similar Novenas and Missions for their feasts. It is certain that these Missions have been growing in recent years in numbers, and it is to be hoped, in efficacy. They have surely been occasions for the return of many to the Sacraments, after a neglect perhaps of many years.

In 1946 a team of six Jesuit Fathers was organised to preach a series of Missions and Retreats, in three groups, in all the parishes of the Coast. It was a time of great unrest in many of them and it was hoped that the Missions might have a calming effect, by opening the eyes of all to the higher verities. In most of the parishes it was a success; a week of prayer and meditation proved very salutary in quickening the spiritual life of the people. Though the experiment as a whole has not been repeated, it served to popularise the idea of Missions with the result that there is scarcely a parish in the diocese that does not have its annual Mission.

The number of Closed Retreats, as well as of those making them, has increased by leaps and bounds since the beginning of the diocese. Though there were scarcely half a dozen such Retreats in 1930, they are tending now to become as common as the Missions and as wide-spread among the parishes It is to be remembered that there are no Retreat Houses, as such, anywhere in the diocese. Neither are there any institutions where more than a couple of men or women could go to make a Retreat. The system followed is this: during the vacations when the schools are closed, a Retreat Master is engaged by the vicar. The men or women who have given in their names for the Retreat are put up in

the schools. Some arrangement is made for their meals, engaging some cooks and workmen to cater to them. The sermons and services are held in the parish church. There is the set-up, crude though it may sound and not quite ideal for silence and recollection, which has been found adequate to keep the Retreatants on their spiritual toes for three full days. Large numbers enter the Retreats, both of men and women, always with great benefit to them if they have but the minimum of generosity required by our merciful Saviour.

The credit of organising the first Retreats in many parishes must be given to the Sodalities of the Bl. Virgin. Its members continue to be the most enthusiastic Retreatants. Catholic Actionists in some parishes come forward to bear the burdens, the heaviest being financial, of organising the Retreats. With cramped quarters and other inconveniences, these Retreats yet play, no doubt, a great part in maintaining and upgrading the spirituality of the faithful of the diocese.

Catechetical Instruction

The system introduced by St. Francis Xavier was that the faithful should be taught their Religion daily, the females in the morning and the males in the evening. This was indeed necessary to ground the new Christians in their faith, the more so as the vast majority of them were illiterate. But in the course of centuries this arrangement gave place to the present one, by which all unmarried Christians of the parish are given catechetical instruction every Sunday. To help the priest in the discharge of this onerous duty, many parishes have Catechetical Associations, while others make use of the Catholic Actionists and Sodalists. All are voluntary teachers. Attendance is usually good, as there is the fear that the young men or women arranging to get married will not only be questioned about their religious knowledge, but also may have to pay a fine for all the wilful absences from class. Once they are married they are free from these classes. Annual meetings are organised, usually on a Sunday near the feast of Epiphany, where prizes are distributed for proficiency in knowledge and regularity in attendance.

Catechism is taught in our schools also for the benefit of Catholic pupils. But by order of Government this subject may be taught only outside regular class hours. This is in no way ideal, as the impression is created in the mind of the young that Religion is only a secondary subject, not so vital to him as other lessons, and therefore not so important in their future life too. But this cannot be helped and we have to make the best of it. Unfortunately many of the teachers too are not always and uniformly over-enthusiastic to have this added burden over their regular class periods. In spite of these drawbacks pupils do benefit from the instructions at school, especially where there are Sisters on the staff, or where the vicar takes a keen interest in the matter.

Repeated efforts have been made to give a uniform syllabus to the schools. The last was made in 1955 extending the syllabi to cover both the primary and secondary schools. For the higher classes a course of Doctrine, Scripture and Liturgy has been prescribed. The want of a good text book in Tamil has been a great handicap for the success of this effort, and it has been thought necessary to compose one in the near future.

H. E. the Bishops have repeatedly reminded the Parish Priests not to neglect the adults. Besides the Sunday homily, they are encouraged to give a catechetical instruction in the afternoon when the people gather for Rosary and Benediction of the Most Bl. Sacrament. But it cannot be said that this instruction is given in all parishes. The usual difficulty is that the majority of those who attend have had an hour or more of regular classes of Religion just a short while before. In spite of this many priests make it a point to give atleast a short catechetical instruction every Sunday.

Catechetical Summer Schools

It may not be far from truth to say that most of the laity, including the educated, are very little instructed in the truths of their religion. Not that they do not know their catechism. But they know little more. Very few indeed are aware of the treasures of knowledge contained in Sacred Theology. Its depth and width, the wonderful cogency with which all its parts fit together, the inner meanings of the different articles of faith, the sound philosophical foundations that render the supernatural mysteries not impossible or improbable–these are virgin fields to the vast majority of even educated Catholics. But the times call for an enlightened laity. Faith and its foundations are assaulted on every side. It has become the fashion for papers and periodicals to repeat ad nauseam the fanciful objections to Christianity spawned by the fertile but misguided brains of rationalists and modernists, long refuted and rejected as worthless. Oral discussions and denunciations, add to the confusion in the mind of the young men of today who feel all the strength of the objections without the least idea as to how to refute them. Nay they even doubt if such a refutation were possible at all. Their faith therefore is in danger of shipwreck. They are liable to become an easy prey to the various 'isms' that are on the look out for victims.

All this danger is due evidently to the sure lack of deeper knowledge of their faith. The more earnest among the laity would not hesitate to contact the priest for a solution of the difficulties. The majority would but float with the tide, perhaps to their eternal damnation.

It was felt therefore that the times were ripe to make an effort to teach the educated among the laity the inner beauties of their faith. The initiative in this necessary endeavour was taken by the Fathers of the deanery of Thirituapuram under their Vicar Forane, Very Rev. Fr. Mary Ephraem Gomez. They set up a committee to study and organise. It all resulted in the holding of a Summer School at Thirituapuram in May 1955. The subject chosen was "Our Catholic Faith". Three full days, with six lectures each day, were to be given for a concentrated exposition of our Faith, so that those who attend would have a general knowledge of theology, with a conviction that the teachings of the Church are indeed divine and could not be overthrown by mere men and their quibblings. A number of Fathers of the district and from without readily undertook to shoulder all the burdens of adequate preparation and interesting presentation. As most of them are in charge of parishes, it was indeed a great sacrifice for them. About 150 men and women, having the minimum standard of education fixed by the Committee, very willingly came forward to undergo the course. Their eagerness to learn and their attention during lectures were indeed edifying. At the end of the course, there was an examination. The best were given valuable prizes, while all those who passed were given a diploma of merit.

The experiment was a success on the one hand, and an eye-opener on the other. From it it was evident that the laity were eager for instruction, they were able to penetrate into the deeper mysteries and appreciate them. Many indeed confessed that they never even suspected that our holy Religion "had so much." Encouraged by it all, the Fathers of the district have made up their mind to make the Catechetical Summer School an annual feature, taking different aspects of Catholicism for treatment in different years. The report of the success has been welcomed warmly by Bishop Agniswami, who has given his encouragement to other Vicars Forane also to organise similar Summer Schools.

Let us hope that the idea takes fire and spreads all over the diocese. It is indeed a necessity of the times.

Liturgical Programme

Ever since the Pontificate of St. Pius X, there has been in the Church a strong liturgical revival that gathers momentum with the passing of years. The Encyclical Letter, "Mediator Dei", of H. H. Pope Pius XII has given official approbation and added impetus to the movement. Results are already evident, as seen in the reform of the Breviary, the Calendar of the Church and in the restoration of the Easter Vigil, the rules regarding Eucharistic Fast and the permission for Evening Mass. All these have but one chief motive, as the Holy Father has repeated so often, namely the pastoral. Conditions now obtaining in the world approximate to those of our forbears at the dawn of Christianity. The Church is hemmed in on all sides by pagan and materialistic societies. The faithful are no longer inspired by the one and only way of life, but are exposed to conflicting moral and spiritual values in all strata of society. Hence arises the necessity of keeping them in constant touch with the sources of grace and strength, through the liturgy. To our fathers, liturgy indeed was a school of instruction for their minds, a fountain of grace for their soul. Their lives centered round the liturgy from which they received effectively everything that was required to mould them to heroic proportions, even unto martyrdom. What it gave to them, it can give to us also, provided we too use it to the same extent.

Though so far away from the centers of reform and renewal, it was felt that our people too had to a great measure the same ailments from which the world as a whole is suffering, and consequently they should not be deprived of the same medicine prescribed by tradition and insisted upon by the Popes. Hence the people have been encouraged to take an active part in the liturgy. In one sense this has been more difficult here than in the West, while in another it has been easier. This requires a word of explanation.

To most of our people the sacred ceremonies have been quite unintelligible, as was to be expected from the low standard of literacy. No doubt their general significance, their efficacy, their importance and necessity were explained to them. But the ceremonies themselves were a closed book. Even to the Altar-boys and the choir, Latin was a mere rigmarole. To the faithful, the Holy Mass offered a convenient time to recite their Rosaries (it is even said loudly by the congregation in some churches!), to interrupt it at the Elevation with some ejaculations and petitions, to receive the blessing of the priest which they are always eager to even outside the Mass, and so to go home to their various avocations. With the Tamil language so very different from Latin, the effort to make them understand the words of the liturgy is bound to be more difficult than in the West.

On the other hand, the Tamils are a naturally musical people. Poetry and song have been their ordinary mode of written expression till very recent times. Thus our people very easily give expression to their feelings of adoration, contrition and love, even during the Holy Sacrifice. It is not uncommon to hear the sighs and aspirations of the people rising like a great heart-throb at the time of the Elevation. Even the ordinary prayers of the Rosary are recited in a musical way. All will fall easily into unison, and say their prayers loud, antiphonally between the men and the women. They join enthusiastically in singing the Divine Praises after Benediction and other Aspirations in Tamil. Even hymns are not above them. With such a set-up, it must be easy to make the transition to the singing of the Common of the Mass. This has been attempted in some parishes already with success.

But this alone will not ensure an intelligent participation, unless the people are taught the meaning of both the words and the ceremonies. This too is on the progamme. Booklets are available that give the transla-

tion of the Mass prayers that could be recited in common at the appropriate time. A few parishes have introduced Dialogue Mass with success. The enthusiasm of the people where such experiments are made is a sure sign that the liturgical movement has every possibility of success in the diocese. The call of the Holy See to the people, so clearly indicated in the New Easter Vigil, to sing and act and take an active part in the liturgy, has given the occasion for an intensification of the liturgical revival in the diocese that has been given a prominent place in the plans, marked out by Bishop Agniswami, for the next twenty five years.

It can be said that not less than 75 per cent of our population are regular in church attendance on Sundays, while the proportion of those who fail to make their annual duties may not, in the aggregate, pass above 25%. A considerable number, with the women of course predominating, make it a point to attend Mass daily and receive Holy Communion. In spite of the great laxity in morals in the world of today, it may be said that the proportion of public sinners has not shown any marked increase. On the other hand, the people show a certain virility of character that seems strong enough, with the grace of God, to withstand the general trend downwards.

All this is gratifying. But it is also evident that greater efforts will have to be made to maintain and elevate the standard of spirituality of the people, since pernicious influences continue to grow both in intensity and in the extent of their reach. Greater Vigilance on the part of the shepherds of souls, more extensive use of the many means which Our Lord has placed in the hands of His Church, a strengthening of home-life traditionally strong in India, more intimate contact between the pastor and the flock, intensification of the apostolate both clerical and lay—these and similar means will have to be sedulously used to combat the growing evils of our times, many of which, unfortunately, may obtain the legal sanction of a non-Christian Government through the constant pressure and approval of a secularized world.

Thank God, there is already an awareness of what is ahead, and a beginning of sincere efforts to meet it.

Diocesan Celebrations

Public demonstrations of faith may also serve as a mark of the religious consciousness of the people. As it was noted before, the people are fond of feasts and celebrations and are ready to gather for such festivities. In the diocese, the Cathedral of St. Francis Xavier has always been a place of pilgrimage. After its elevation to the dignity of a cathedral, an effort was made to organise these pilgrimages during the Novena to the Saint. Thus different days were assigned to different parishes. On the day fixed, the faithful of that parish, with their pastor at their head, would come in pilgrimage to the Shrine, walking as many as twelve miles from their church, where they would have received the appropriate blessing for pilgrims before starting. At the outskirts of the town they would form into a procession, with the Cross leading, banners flying, the different Associations lined up with their special insignia. They would wake up the local population with their hymns and prayers. The pilgrims would reach the Cathedral by break of day, in time to participate in a High Mass, to receive Holy Communion, and kiss the Relic of the Saint. After their own private devotions they would disperse and return, by bus if the distance to their village were long.

This may be said to be the beginning of organised demonstrations on an all-diocesan basis, The effectiveness of such organisation was made manifest in 1938, at the burial of H. E. Bishop Lawrence Pereira, when his funeral cortege was attended by most of the Confraternities of the diocese.

Another occasion was offered when in 1942 the fourth centenary of the arrival in India of St. Francis Xavier was commemorated. A grand procession wended its way from the Bishop's House to the Cathedral through the town, to the edification of its inhabitants. Mention has already been made of the Sacerdotal Silver Jubilee of H. E. Bishop Agniswami in 1948.

Visit of the Pilgrim Virgin

In 1950 the Pilgrim Virgin of Fatima deigned to visit the diocese for four full days. A carefully arranged programme provided that there would be a chance for every parish to pay homage to this glorious Visitor. Booklets, leaflets and posters spread the good news all over the land. Every parish was aflame with enthusiasm. Even parishes torn by dissensions sunk their petty squabbles to honour the Queen of Peace. It was indeed a triumphal progress for the Mother of God who attracted to her presence not only the Catholics but men of goodwill of every religion. This triumphal tour was sparked by a mammoth procession from the Bishop's House to the Cathedral.

She had been already received at about 5 P. M. of the 27th of January, at the northern boundary of the diocese by H. E. the Bishop. It was about 6 P. M. when the Statue reached the Bishop's House. Its grounds were already full to overflowing with all the Confraternities, Sodalities and other Associations from every parish, and with thousands of the faithful who were too impatient to wait for Her to visit them in their own neighbourhood. The two-mile route was thronged with men and women of the town and the suburbs. Road-junctions were blocked by dense crowds and all traffic came to a standstill. The procession, marching four abreast, moved forward, group after group, each with its own banners flying, its own prayers and hymns soaring to the evening skies in honour of the Blessed Visitor. The route was gorgeously decorated with flags, buntings, triumphal arches and lights. It is noteworthy that many non-catholics undertook to decorate their homes and premises along the way.

The Statue was enthroned on a tastefully decorated truck high above the crowd, so that all could see and feel Her sweetness and love. There was many a hand among the non-catholics that rose unconsciously in salute, many a heart that paid its homage of admiration and veneration. Another truck went ahead bearing fifteen children dressed as angels to symbolize the mysteries of the Rosary, who continually scattered flowers at the feet of the Queen. An immense throng followed the procession. The perfect order and decorum of the huge procession thrilled the on-lookers, and elicited repeated congratulations from the Police-force whose services were required, to their astonishment, more as a Guard of honour, than as keepers of peace and order.

At the Cathedral grounds, a big shamiana had been erected to receive the statue. It was felt that the Cathedral itself would be too small for even one tenth of the crowd. After Benediction of the Most Bl. Sacrament had been imparted by H. E. the Bishop, relays of faithful kept watch all through the night, with prayers and hymns, till in the early hours of the morning a Pontifical Mass was offered, inaugurating Her tour through the diocese. It was an unforgettable experience—one in a life time.

In the morning of 28th the Pilgrim Virgin began the visitation of the Diocese. After a brief stay at St. Joseph's Convent, She proceeded along the coastal road to Colachel receiving on the way the homages of the parishes of Kurusady, Sarel, Pillatope, Muttom, Kadiapattanam and Puthur. As it was not possible, due to lack of time, to enter each village, the parishioners gathered at the road-junctions nearest to them.

where they had erected decorated pandals, with buntings and streamers all along the route. The Statue would stop at each pandal for about half an hour, during which a short sermon would be preached, prayers recited, and hymns sung. The sick were then presented, rosaries and medals touched to the Statue, and to the great regret of the people, the Virgin would move on to the next stop. Often it was found that the people were following, walking and running, as though loathe to be separated from their Mother. Thus when the Statue reached Colachel, there was not only the local population, but also thousands from all the neighbouring parishes. For their convenience, the Statue was placed in a pandal outside the church, where it remained exposed to the veneration of the people all night through.

This was the general programme, and this the general experience on the following days and nights. After Solemn High Mass in the early morning, with a panegyric on the Virgin, She resumed Her tour northward, receiving the salutes of the people of Ritapuram, Mathravilai, Enayam, Puthenthurai, Amasi, Puthukadai and Kallithattu, reaching the Forane church of Thirituapuram in the evening. Next day Her way lay through mountainous regions: Kuzhithurai, Cheruvallur, Puthenkadai, Kulasekharam, Manalikarai, Thuckalay and thus to the Forane church of Mulagumudu, where the night was spent. The places visited on 31st January were Manguli, Kandanvilai, Karangad, Madathattuvilai, Asaripallam, Christ King at Nagercoil, Rajakamangalam, Puthenthurai, Manakudi, Covalam and thus to Cape Comorin, the land's end of India, where the night vigil was kept. On the last day She received the homage of the people of Mathal and Rajavoor, and at 12 o'clock noon, she passed on into the diocese of Tuticorin.

It is to be noted that everywhere She was greeted not only by Her Catholic children but also by other Christians, Hindus and Muslims. At more than one place the Car was stopped by non-christians who desired to have 'darshan' of the Virgin and requested the Fathers to explain to them the significance of Her tour, and finally honoured Her with pious obeisances and the traditional garlands of flowers. It is also to be noted that Her tour sparked a great revival of faith and devotion among the people; factions were soon ended; many conversions followed—all due to the attraction of Her personal appeal.

The visit of the Pilgrim Virgin was indeed a great blessing to the diocese.

The Scapular Centenary

The year 1951 was notable as the Seventh Centenary of the tradition of the scapular by Our Lady of Mount Carmel to St. Simon Stock. The period of time between July 16, 1950 and the same date in 1951 was celebrated as a Jubilee year in all the dioceses of Malabar, culminating in a Marian Congress at Ernakulam. As directed by a Joint-Pastoral Letter of the Hierarchy of Malabar, devotion to the Scapular was revived through special Missions preached in every parish by a team of Carmelite Fathers. Every parish had its own celebrations, with processions and meetings. The diocesan celebration came off on the last day of the Jubilee Year, 16th July, 1951. On the eve Marian Sodalities and Carmel Confraternities gathered at the Cathedral whence a procession escorted a Statue of Our Lady of Mount Carmel to the premises of Carmel High School, where Pontifical Vespers was sung by H. E. Bishop Vincent Dereere, O.C.D., Bishop of Trivandrum. He also officiated at the Pontifical Mass on the 16th morning. At a public meeting that followed, the glories of Mary, and the wonders She has wrought through Her Scapular, as well as the achievement of the Carmelite Fathers in these parts were extolled by many speakers. The functions concluded with a tableau vivant of Our Lady giving the scapular to St. Simon.

A Double Centenary

The nineteenth centenary of the martyrdom of St. Thomas the Apostle and the fourth of the death of St. Francis Xavier, Apostle of India, coincided in the year 1952. Catholic India was eager to celebrate the double event in a fitting manner. The Churches of Malabar took a prominent part as they had claims on both these Apostles. In fact, the All-India celebrations were held at Ernakulam in the form of a National Eucharistic Congress. It may be interesting to note that it was during this Congress that the announcement came through of the nomination of India's first Cardinal.

At Goa, the incorrupt body of St. Francis Xavier was exposed for public veneration during the month of December. H. E. the Bishop led a pilgrimage from this diocese. Many priests and a great number of the laity, both men and women, availed themselves of this great occasion to view the great Saint who had poured the saving waters on the heads of their ancestors four hundred years ago.

The diocese celebrated the double centenary in November, 1952. A mammoth procession took the decorated statue of St. Francis Xavier round the town. Half way through the rains came down, so that by the time the procession reached the Cathedral grounds, there was a steady shower. This interfered to a certain extent with the programme, as huge crowd had to stand in the open throughout. But their faith rose to the occasion, as was remarked by H. E. Bishop Mathew Kavukatt, Bishop of Changanachery, one of the speakers of the public meeting that immediately followed the procession. It was presided over by H. E. Mar Saverios, Bishop of Thiruvella. Bishop Agniswami welcomed the gathering. Bishop Thomas Fernando of Tuticorin was the other speaker. Bishop Jerome Fernandez of Quilon was also present.

The rain had become a heavy down-pour. But the people would not move. Immediately after the meeting, the crowd joined in a thunderous recital of the Credo, publicly acknowledging the faith brought to their ancestors centuries ago by the two Apostles of India, whose statues were enthroned on either side. Pontifical Benediction followed.

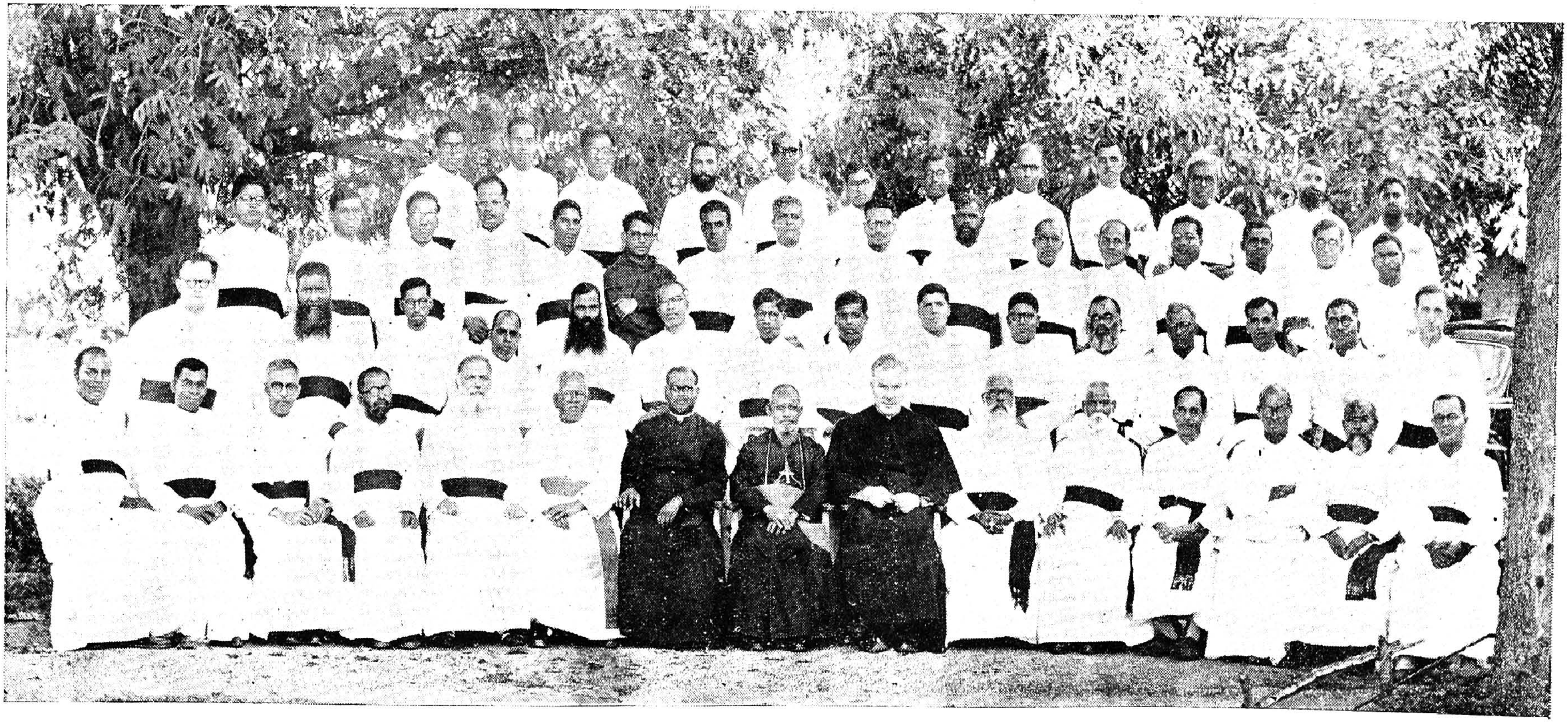
Next day, the Pontifical Mass was offered by the Bishop of Quilon, followed by another Pontifical Mass in the Syro-Malankara rite by Mar Saverios. A great number of the faithful received Holy Communion.

1952 also happened to be the second centenary of the martyrdom of Devasahayam Pillai, whose remains are interred within the Cathedral. This event we could commemorate only with fervent prayers that God may deign to raise his servant to the honours of the altar.

On 18th November, 1953 the diocese had the honour of giving a public reception to His Eminence Eugene Cardinal Tisserant, Dean of the Sacred College of Cardinals, and Secretary to the Sacred Congregation of Oriental Churches. This was the first time that a Prince of the Church had visited these parts. He had come with a major Relic of St. Thomas the Apostle from Ortona, Italy, which has been since placed in a special Pontifical Shrine at Cranganore. Next day His Eminence visited important centers in the diocese. He took his departure in the afternoon.

Marian Year 1954

The proclamation of a special Marian Jubilee by Pope Pius XII was an occasion of great religious revival in the diocese. H. E. the Bishop through a Pastoral letter encouraged every parish to renew its devotion to the Mother of God by a more Christian life of faith and piety. Every parish had its triduum in Her honour, in which the solid doctrines at the base of the Church's devotion to Mary were clearly explained, so that popular devotion might not be a matter of mere



REV. FR. P. PEYTON C. S. C. OF FAMILY ROSARY CRYSADE WITH THE CLERGY OF KOTTAR

sentiment. Many parishes organised grand processions and public meetings to honour Her. All were enthusiastic in obtaining the rich Indulgences so liberally brought within the reach of all by the Holy Father.

The diocese celebrated the Year with a Marian Exhibition and a Public Meeting in October. The Exhibition was housed in the Carmel High School. The exhibits were arranged in six sections, depicting the Life of Mary on Earth, the chief Marian Dogmas, recent Apparitions of Mary, her special Devotions, Mary in Art, and the position of Mary in the Home, in the Diocese, in India and in the World. The whole covered more than a thousand feet of wall space. The exhibition was planned and arranged by the Canonesses of St. Augustine of St. Joseph's Convent, Nagercoil. It was very imposing, beautiful and instructive. Opened on 7th October by H. E. the Bishop, thousands upon thousands visited the exhibition. A team of young men and women accompanied the visitors round explaining each section as they passed through.

Sunday October 10 was the day fixed for the diocesan celebration. It was held in the spacious grounds of Carmel High School where a large stage had been erected at one end. From early morning the people began to pour into the grounds in their thousands. Special arrangement had been made with bus companies by the different parish priests for the transport of their people.

At 3 p. m. the Confraternities and pious associations of the diocese had a general meeting in two sections, one for men and the other for women, in which matters of interest to them were discussed and resolutions passed for their betterment.

At 4.30 p. m. H. E. Bishop Agniswami sang a Pontifical Mass, followed by Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. The diocese was consecrated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. This was followed by a public meeting.

H. E. the Bishop presided. The huge gathering, surpassing any that had been so far witnessed at Nagercoil, was welcomed by the Vicar General who was the president of the organising committee. There were two speeches on the impact of Mary on men and women respectively. Then the Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary were dramatised in silent motion, by the girls of St. Joseph's Convent Schools, with a running commentary by Rev. Fr. Paul Sebastian. Each Mystery was introduced by the recitation of a decade of the Rosary, and concluded by appropriate hymns to Our Lady. On a stage with three levels the actors, trained by the good Canonesses, surpassed all expectation. It was, as a Hindu friend exclaimed, a bit of heaven brought to earth.

Family Rosary Crusade

It was providential that the Marian Year was succeeded by the Family Rosary Crusade. The faithful were so full of devotion to the Blessed Mother that the Crusade was bound to succeed. Rev. Fr. Patrick Peyton had established his temporary headquarters at Bombay, and had promised to visit the diocese and address a rally at Nagercoil. The Crusade followed his directions found to have been very effective elsewhere, so that it was spread out from January 9, 1955 to February 17. On the whole it may be said to have been a success in the diocese. More than a hundred thousand persons signed the pledge.

On January 10 Fr. Peyton arrived at Nagercoil. Most of the priests of the diocese were present to welcome him, to whom he gave an inspiring talk on the Rosary and its wonderful efficacy. A group photo was taken with him in the midst of the clergy of the diocese. The Rosary Rally at 5 p. m. was held at St. Joseph's Convent. It was largely attended by representatives from every parish in the diocese. The speech of Fr. Peyton had to be rendered into Tamil for the benefit of the large gathering. The rally concluded with a film on the Glorious Mysteries of the Rosary.

8. OTHER INSTITUTIONS

Orphanages

Institutions for the care of orphans and the aged poor are not many in the diocese. The Canonesses of St. Augustine have been maintaining all along a cresche for foundlings as well an orphanage for destitute girls at Mulagumudu. As many as 400 are cared for in this big institution. The Government used to give some help towards the maintenance of the orphans. But the rate of help was so low (about Rs. 8 per head per year!) and the demands for inspection etc. were so high, that this help is no longer asked for.

The aged, destitute women too find a haven for their declining years in this institution. But the resources are so meagre that not many could be entertained there.

Other convents too, to varying degrees, take care of orphan girls, so that it may be said that the female destitute are well provided for. The same cannot be said of boys and old men. An orphanage for boys has indeed been a need of the diocese, and many efforts had been made to interest some Religious Congregation or other to take up this necessary form of charity. Failing in this, it was finally decided, on the occasion of the Silver Jubilee of the diocese, to open an orphanage on a moderate scale, to be developed later as circumstances and means permitted.

Accordingly on 29th October, 1955, the 16th Anniversary of the Consecration of Bishop Agniswami, St. Lawrence Orphanage for Boys was blessed and opened with about a dozen boys. The name has been chosen with a view to perpetuate the memory of the first Bishop of Kottar. The number of boys is gradually increasing. They are from seven to ten years of age. They attend the neighbouring schools. As they grow up, it is intended to give them some technical or industrial training, such as carpentry, tailoring etc. so that when they leave the orphanage they would be well equipped to face the future.

The orphanage is for the time housed in the old Boarding House of Carmel High School, with its Manager, Rev. Fr. Paul Sebastian, as the Director, with an assistant to supervise the boys. But plans are already evolved to build a suitable house elsewhere.

A Home for destitute old men is still to take shape in the diocese. The scheme is still in the safe-keeping of Providence.

Dispensaries

The Canonesses of St. Augustine have been ever mindful of the sick-poor in the places of their apostolate. Especially where other adequate medical help has been wanting, they have hastened to alleviate the sufferings of the infirm with timely aid. Thus dispensaries have been functioning from the very start in their Convents at Mulagumudu, Cape Comorin and Ritapuram.

The other Religious Congregations too have not been backward in giving aid to the sick. Almost all the convents have some medicines ready to be dispensed to those who approach them—usually the very poor who cannot afford to call in a professional medical practitioner. Some of our priests too sacrifice their time and money in providing immediate assistance to the ailing. The Carmelite Missionaries of Manalikarai have gone in a large way to maintain a dispensary where everyone irrespective of caste or creed is given treatment.

The Sisters of the Holy Cross of Mengingen work in the Municipal area of Nagercoil with Christ-like charity and kindness, visiting the sick, giving medical relief, advising them in child-care and hygiene, etc. As the Sisters are mostly occupied with nursing, for which they are trained, and have hospitals in other dioceses, it is hoped that they will soon find ways and means of opening a Dispensary, if not a Hospital, in Kottar also.

Indeed a good Catholic Hospital will be a great boon to our people. Let us hope that in time it will be granted to them.

Food Distribution

A word may be added here about the free distribution of food to the poor that has become almost a permanent feature in the last few years. Thanks are due to the generous American Catholics, who through their Bishops make available to India large consignments of milk-powder, butter, oil, egg-powder, cheese, etc. Their representative at New Delhi arranges for the distribution of these food-materials from the ports of Bombay and Madras. Till the Government of India stepped in and allowed free transportation by rail to the various dioceses, each had to pay for the freightage. Though this was a heavy burden on the finances of Kottar, it was readily undertaken in a spirit of charity to help in the alleviation of the poor, so numerous and pitiful in these parts.

Under supervision of Government authorities, the drums and cartons are distributed to all the parishes and institutions. There the milk-powder is prepared in liquid form and given to the poor of all communities and creeds, from the highest to the lowest. It is again a big sacrifice for these parishes and institutions, often poor themselves, to transport and distribute, with due preparation, these materials. But the need is so great, as is amply evident from the crowds that flock to get a share with pots and pans, the patience with which they wait their turn, and the eagerness shown in consuming and taking home with them the free supply of milk etc. The children especially are greatly benefited so that the schools are given preference in the distribution.

How much longer this will continue, we cannot say. But the charity of our American brothers-in-Christ seems inexhaustible, God bless them, and it may be years before the need ceases in India. Let us hope that the Government of India will turn a deaf ear to the wanton criticisms and recommendations of some who seem to wear jaundiced glasses, and continue to extend their generous patronage to this divine charity.

Press and Periodical

Recent Popes in general, and St. Pius X in particular have not been slow in emphasising the need of Catholic Presses and publications as a means of defending the rights of the Church, of correcting misrepresentations and vilifications, and also of extending the sphere of Her influence beyond the reach of ordinary Apostolate. Always eager to feel with the Church and act with it as far as possible, the two Bishops of the diocese were anxious to have a Press which would contribute, in its small way, towards these ideals. But financial and other serious considerations stood in the way, till in 1945 an occasion was offered of buying the Assisi Press of the Capuchin Fathers of Quilon.

The Press with its name was acquired and set up at Nagercoil in a hired building on 19th July, 1945. Rt. Rev. Vincent Fernandez, B. A., L. T., who was then the Vicar General, undertook to manage it in the absence of a suitable hand free for the work. Some time later, on November 1st 1947 it was shifted to the premises of St. Francis' School, Nagercoil, where it continues to this day, under the management of Rev. Fr. Benedict Alexander.

It has but twenty employees. But though so small, it has made its mark in the printing field of Catholic India, chiefly through such national publications as the Monthly Letter, the Annual of the Apostolic Union of the Sacred Heart for Secular Priests, etc. It is also one of the foremost in bringing our cheap publications, well within the buying capacity of the bulk of our people, to popularise Catholic teaching. No doubt it has more than pulled its weight in combating the insidious doctrine of Communism and atheism. It is also the printing house for the diocesan Monthly, called THENOLI, or Voice of the South.

The need for such a diocesan organ was felt rather early. In this age of growing literacy, with a flood of harmful publications

pouring out on the public, it was indeed necessary to have a cheap medium to teach sound doctrine, to give the correct slant on world-news, to defend the Church from attacks, to encourage all with word and example in their efforts at Catholic Action. As early as 1942 Government was petitioned for a licence. But it was a time of strife over Catholic schools, and the petition was rejected. It was only in 1948 that permission was finally granted. Work was started forthwith and the first number came out on Easter Day.

From the beginning, the Editor has been Rt. Rev. Fr. J. M. Villavarayan, the Vicar General. Due to want of priests in the diocese and the necessary funds to employ laymen, he has had to do the editorial work single-handed, which has been a handicap in bringing it out with an uniform standard of excellence. It has been exposed therefore to varying degrees of praise and censure. But it may be asserted that THENOLI has received acclaim from all over Tamilnad as a pioneer in the modernisation of Catholic magazines in the Tamil language.

It has another claim to pre-eminence. It is the cheapest on the market. The annual subscription is only a Rupee and a quarter. Handsome discount is allowed on bulk purchases of two dozen or more copies, reducing the rate to scarcely a Rupee. For this low rate, it gives about forty pages of matter, with attractive covers and illustrations. As its only aim is the apostolate of truth, it carries on bravely in spite of financial strain.

Much could be done to make THENOLI more popular and attractive. But for this the Editor should be less burdened with other works; better still, there should be a staff of helpers in this very necessary work of the Church. It is hoped that in the course of time these defects would be remedied.

As it is, it counts its subscribers from every Tamil diocese of India, Ceylon and Malaya.

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VITA FUNCTI

Dum Dioecesi Adscripti

No.	Name	Date of Birth	Ordination	Death	
1	Very Rev. Fr. Michael Cruz	1890	1917	9th August,	1933
2	Rev. Fr. Pathrose Fernandez	1894	1922	1st October,	1933
3	,, ,, Lawrence Fernandez	1900	1925	13th February,	1937
4	,, ,, Victor Rodriguez	1905	1929	30th August,	1937
5	Very Rev. Fr. Ignatius Maria	1890	1918	26th January,	1946
6	Rev. Fr. Lucas Fernandez	1896	1924	14th January,	1949
7	,, ,, Boniface Rebeira	1881	1907	23rd March,	1950
8	Very Rev. Fr. Peter Thomas O. C. D.			18th April,	1944
	His Excellency the Most Rev. LAWRENCE PEREIRA, First Bishop of Kottar:			5th January,	1938

Olim Dioecesi Adscripti

1	Very Rev. Fr. John Pereira	12th March,	1942
2	,, ,, ,, Dominic Nicholas Plamoode	18th March,	1955

REQUIEM AETERNAM DONA EIS DOMINE
ET LUX PERPETUA LUCEAT EIS

CORRIGENDA

P.	Col.	L.	For	Read
14	1	20	set	sect
15	2	24	as	on
16	2	27	Supperior	Superior
18	1	9	sum of Rs. 100 parados	sum of 100 parados
19	2	16	erected a Curusadı thus,	erected a Curusady, thus
22	1	41	cedrapla	replaced
31		33	Thikkanacode	Thikkanamcode
31		44	Pericad	Periacad
35	1	7	P. 7 fol	p. 17 fol.
35	1	15	p: 16 fol	p. 23 fol.
39	1	21	in 1933	in 1935
39	2	3	in May 1944	in June 1944.
40		19	(vide p. 27)	(vide p. 31)
53	1	28	trail	trial
53	2	23	Suspicious	Suspicions
56	1	37	to give some	to give up some.........
59	2	34	not longer	not long
62	1	36	with fifty miles	within fifty miles
62	2	2	located between	located midway between
79	1	6	American Catholics	American Public